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Washington, DC 20591

# **Operation Heli-STAR - Community Involvement**

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September 1997

Final Report

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<p>16. Abstract</p> <p>Operation Heli-STAR (Helicopter Short-Haul Transportation and Aviation Research) was established and operated in Atlanta, Georgia, during the period of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Heli-STAR had three major thrusts: 1) the establishment and operation of a helicopter-based cargo transportation system, 2) the management of low-altitude air traffic in the airspace of an urban area, and 3) the collection and analysis of research and development data associated with items 1 and 2. Heli-STAR was a cooperative industry/government program that included parcel package shippers and couriers in the Atlanta area, the helicopter industry, aviation electronics manufacturers, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and support contractors.</p> <p>Several detailed reports have been produced as a result of Operation Heli-STAR. These include 4 reports on acoustic measurements and associated analyses, and reports on the Heli-STAR tracking data including the data processing and retrieval system, the Heli-STAR cargo simulation, and the community response system. In addition, NASA's Advanced General Aviation Transport Experiments (AGATE) program has produced a report describing the Atlanta Communications Experiment (ACE) which produced the avionics and ground equipment using automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) technology. This latter report is restricted to organizations belonging to NASA's AGATE industry consortium. A complete list of these reports is shown on the following page.</p>					
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### Operation Heli-STAR Technical Reports

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Volume 2 DOT/FAA/ND-97/10	Operation Heli-STAR - Helicopter Noise Levels Near Dekalb Peachtree Airport; Krishan Ahuja, Robert Funk, Jeffrey Hsu, Marcie Benne, Mary L. Rivamonte, and Charles Stancil; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia; September 1997
Volume 3 DOT/FAA/ND-97/11	Operation Heli-STAR - Helicopter Noise Annoyance Near Dekalb Peachtree Airport; Krishan Ahuja, Marcie Benne, Mary L. Rivamonte, Robert Funk, Jeffrey Hsu, and Charles Stancil; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia; September 1997
Volume 4 DOT/FAA/ND-97/12	Operation Heli-STAR - Helicopter Noise at Heliports; Krishan Ahuja, Robert Funk, Jeffrey Hsu, and Charles Stancil; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia; September 1997
Volume 5 DOT/FAA/ND-97/13	Operation Heli-STAR - Effects of Buildings on Helicopter Noise; Krishan Ahuja, Robert Funk, Jeffrey Hsu, Michael Heiges, and Charles Stancil; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia; September 1997
Volume 6 DOT/FAA/ND-97/14	Operation Heli-STAR - Aircraft Position Data; Michael Heiges, Shabnam Khan; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia, September 1997
Volume 7 DOT/FAA/ND-97/15	Operation Heli-STAR - Cargo Simulation System; Ellen Bass, and Charles Stancil; Georgia Tech Research Institute, Atlanta, Georgia, September 1997
Volume 8 DOT/FAA/ND-97/16	Operation Heli-STAR - Community Involvement; Christine Eberhard and Bobbi Rupp; CommuniQuest, Inc., Manhattan Beach, California; September 1997
Volume 9 DOT/FAA/ND-97/17	Operation Heli-STAR - Atlanta Communication Experiment (ACE), AGATE Flight Systems Communication Work Package 1.4, (AGATE Restricted Information) (AGATE Flight Systems Communication Team), December 1996.

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## **I. Introduction**

Demands by the public to be involved in making public sector decisions have been amplified by the environmental movement and are a continuing development in the United States given the democratic tradition of citizen activism. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is required by law and regulations to provide opportunities for community involvement by the National Environmental Protection Act, the Administrative Procedure Act and FAR Part 150 Studies. However, these requirements do not offer guidelines on how to effectively involve the community. Effective community involvement is proportional to the research project mission and requires a strong commitment, far beyond the minimum required by law and regulation.

The FAA understands that government projects impacting either the aviation industry or the general public will not be left to government experts alone to design and implement. The FAA, as well as other government entities, are now challenged to step beyond the role of arbitrating among competing interests and become actively engaged with internal and external stakeholders to reach alternative solutions and share obligations. The FAA regards community involvement as an essential element in the development of programs and decisions that affect the public. To ensure accountability to community involvement, the FAA released its official policy on April 17, 1995, which clearly states the agency's goals of this important effort:

- "To promote a shared obligation of the public and FAA decision-makers in identifying aviation-related concerns and developing and evaluating alternatives to address them, and
- To promote an active public role to minimize potentially adverse community reaction to agency plans that are necessary for safe, effective and environmentally responsible management of our airspace."

The FAA's General Aviation and Vertical Flight Program Office (AND-710) is an agency forerunner in designing and executing a comprehensive community involvement process to ensure accomplishment of the national Heli-STAR research initiative. Implementation for community involvement paralleled the already established Heli-STAR collaborative technical working structure with the aviation industry, local and Federal Governments, the general public and the Atlanta Committee for Olympic Games (ACOG).

### **THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The community involvement aspect of the Heli-STAR project was proposed to parallel the technical project. It was planned to provide opportunities for local communities and interested publics to comment on proposed project components as well as provide input into project development.

The role of community development was to effectively provide outreach and receive input from the various interests regarding the project. Community involvement for this project is defined as:

*Open, active participation by the publics in a technical project activity.*

Years ago, "public relations" was an all-encompassing role for working with the public. Today, there are a number of methods for gaining specific results. Public relations or public affairs departments today usually focus on media relations as well as promoting a program. Public relations involves publicity to gain greater positive awareness regarding a project, organization or program.

A community involvement program is different from a public relations effort, although the two often have overlapping areas. Public relations is "out there" promoting and publicizing a project, while community involvement is inviting the public into the decision-making process. In fact, community involvement is a specific activity within a broader category of community relations. Community relations is the term used for outreach efforts with local publics. However, that outreach may or may not have a community involvement or public participation aspect.

Just as public relations is a positive promotion, community relations usually means being more involved in the community, but does not necessarily involve the community in decision-making processes. It is this critical step, giving the community part ownership in a project or organization, which usually defines community involvement.

### CRITICAL ROLE

In today's environment, organizations, programs and projects require outreach beyond public relations or community relations to be effective and ultimately successful. Technical work is often jeopardized in later stages of a project if sufficient input has not been requested early-on. It is the role of community involvement to provide mechanisms to ensure that interested publics are aware of a project which has potential impacts and that they have sufficient opportunities to provide input.

That input must also be carefully evaluated by a community involvement team to reduce impacts associated with the project or program. Through workshops, hearings, small group meetings and one-on-one involvement, interested community members are provided opportunities to comment, provide input and in some cases to determine the aspects of a project.

### WITHIN THE HELI-STAR PROJECT

Within the Heli-Star project, the responsibility of the Community Involvement Team was designed to develop the mechanisms outlined in this plan, implement the various aspects and coordinate the outreach effort. The Community Involvement Team assisted the technical team in translating technical issues into lay-person terms for presentations and meetings throughout the course of the project.

In addition, the team intended to continually evaluate the technical aspects from the perspective of the various publics that would be affected. The proposed responsibility of the Community Involvement Team was to provide insight into community reactions, to project alternatives and assist the technical team in finding compatible solutions.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH MISSION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Community Involvement portion of the Heli-Star project was to:

*Develop and implement an efficient, systematic and collaborative community involvement program.*

This mission statement focused on the need to provide a community involvement program which would effectively reach the maximum number of potentially interested and affected publics. The intent was to do so in an efficient manner which would allow the greatest input through a regional approach in the form of a Steering Committee that would guide the team in developing individual community outreach efforts.

Specific Community Involvement Mission Objectives were:

- Meet FAA community involvement policy requirements,
- Develop a model program for future AND-710 government/industry public partnerships,
- Seek collaborative working relationships to share resource obligations,
- Develop an implementation structure which promotes continuing public involvement, and
- Manage public awareness so that the Heli-Star project would not experience delay or cancellation.

The goals of this community involvement program were to obtain the maximum awareness possible for the Heli-Star program within the Atlanta region, provide adequate opportunities for interested publics to provide comments and input and ultimately to obtain community acceptance of the project.

## **II. Development of the Community Outreach Plan**

### **OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

CommuniQuest, in conjunction with the Heli-Star team, identified potential community issues and concerns that could arise from the increased use of helicopters and other general aviation aircraft before, during and after the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. CommuniQuest provided recommendations for diffusing and resolving community issues and concerns.

Included in this effort was the establishment of a Heli-Star Community Involvement Team for community, media and public education related to Heli-Star. CommuniQuest's support included identification of points of contact, setting of detailed milestones, scheduling and support of meetings and regular status reports to SAIC for distribution to FAA/AND-710. CommuniQuest facilitated effective communication among the SAIC Contractor Team, FAA/AND-710, the FAA Southern Region (ASO), Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), and the local communities. Media relations were intended to be performed by the ASO with SAIC Contractor Team support, as required. CommuniQuest was the focal point for SAIC and the FAA in developing a Community Response System to assist local communities, airports and FAA officials in responding quickly and satisfactorily to community inquiries and complaints that could arise during the period of heightened helicopter traffic.

An information packet that describes Heli-Star and the structure and operation of the Community Response System was also to be developed. The intended distribution points for this information packet were airports, control towers, Flight Service Stations, cities and local FAA offices.

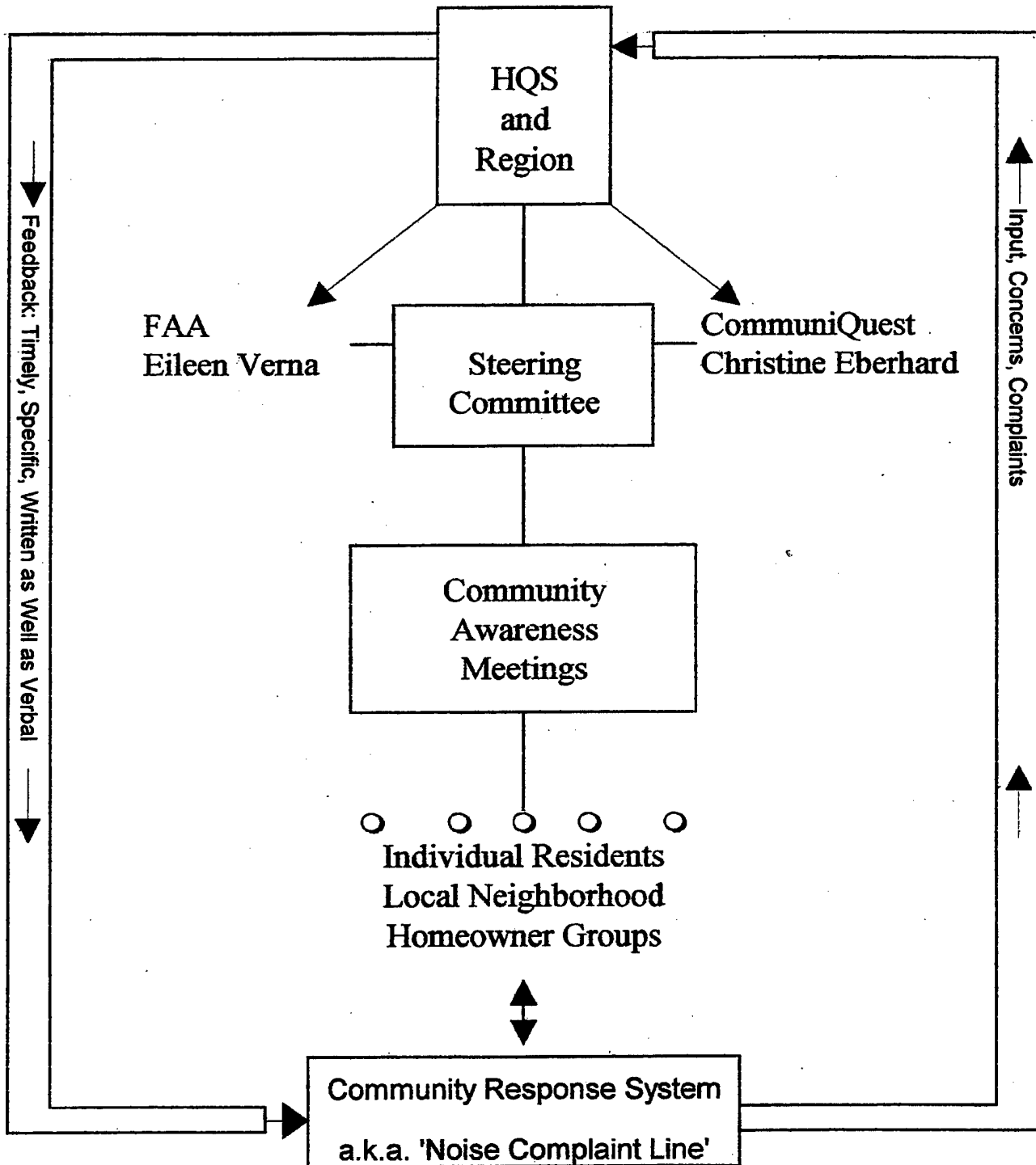
### **OVERALL PROPOSED PROCESS**

The Heli-Star Community Involvement Implementation Steps were proposed as follows:

- Conduct and document a brief strategic analysis to validate the necessity for community involvement,
- Identify all "publics" that need to be contacted and document rationale for involvement,
- Conduct local "reconnaissance" to understand issues and possible solutions,
- Develop communications protocols and operational management structure, and
- Begin implementation within the local community by February 1, 1996 and continue interactive involvement throughout the 1996 summer Olympic games, July 19 through August 5, 1996.

The process to involve the community in the Heli-Star project would require extensive outreach efforts. A process design (Exhibit 1) was developed to facilitate this endeavor. The structure was designed to maximize participation based on time and budget available. To accomplish this, the plan called for a Steering Committee to guide the Heli-Star team in terms of community involvement.

## Community Involvement Program Structure For Heli-STAR



## PROPOSED STEERING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Steering Committee was to guide the development and implementation of the Community Involvement Plan. It would provide a top line of communication between team, agencies and officials.

This Steering Committee would be an oversight group to assist the Heli-Star team in making critical decisions related to community involvement. Their combined experience would help the Heli-Star team stay on track, to maintain the most efficient and effective outreach possible.

In addition, and of critical importance to the FAA, the Steering Committee would provide the first line of involvement. Because they represent local, regional and state agencies, they would assist the team in developing awareness.

The Steering Committee was not intended to have direct responsibilities, but rather provide insight into local community issues and concerns. They would help the team avoid known pitfalls in local outreach efforts. The team planned to seek their input for appropriate awareness meetings, as needed and requested. The Steering Committee, would filter ideas, issues and concerns from the local communities and interested publics to the Heli-Star.

The Steering Committee was designed to be comprised of 15 - 20 individuals carefully chosen to represent local and regional government agencies who would be most impacted by the demonstration project. This oversight group would be an essential ingredient to ensure that public entities are sufficiently aware and informed about the demonstration. Most, if not all, would represent government agencies who were keenly aware of and sensitive to community input. Many of the members would know each other and probably have worked together on other projects.

Proposed membership in the Steering Committee would include representatives from:

- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Individual County Commissions
- Dekalb/Peachtree (PDK) Airport
- Charlie Brown Airport
- Atlanta Hartsfield Airport
- Individual County/Regional Chamber Directors
- Southern Region FAA
- Individual City staff, as requested and appropriate:
  - City of Atlanta
  - City of Roswell
- ACOG - Transportation liaison
- Georgia DOT

Six to eight full meetings were intended. In addition, continuing coordination between individual members would be necessary. These staff representatives, being very busy, would not want too many meetings.

Meetings would be held at a convenient location. The Community Involvement team, in conjunction with the ASO, proposed to coordinate and facilitate the meetings. Presentations and updates on the project would be provided as needed and requested. Members would discuss pertinent issues from their agencies, which would have arisen since the last meeting. Local community issues would also be brought to the group either by Steering Committee members, Heli-Star members or local residents.

This Steering Committee was not meant, nor was it really capable of "representing" the local communities, residents, or homeowner groups. Because it was comprised of government staff representatives, it would be viewed with some skepticism by local citizenry. However, the Steering Committee's vital role would be to assist the Heli-Star team in its efforts.

#### COMMUNITY AWARENESS MEETINGS

The purpose of the Community Awareness Meetings was to assist in communication among the various community interests, the Steering Committee, and the Heli-Star team to ensure effective community involvement was taking place and that affected interests had opportunity to comment, particularly during the Olympic Games.

These intended meetings were to be instrumental in keeping the Steering Committee and Heli-Star team advised of community concerns as the project was conducted.

Input from these meetings was meant to assist the team in being more effective and efficient in its outreach efforts. Participants were to provide valuable input and reaction to proposals as a sounding board for local residents. This was planned to assist the team with staying on target and averting "hot spots" and crises.

Community Awareness Meetings would be held upon request by local civic organizations or public officials. The Steering Committee would be instrumental in coordinating necessary meetings, particularly close to the proposed routes and heliport sites.

Meetings were most likely to occur in the following areas:

- Near Hartsfield International Airport,
- Near Dekalb Peachtree Airport,
- Near Charlie Brown Airport,
- In the Roswell area,
- Neighborhood(s) near each proposed heliport site, and
- Neighborhoods potentially impacted by traffic over proposed helicopter route.

## PROPOSED COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM

The Community Response System was proposed to provide a communication mechanism for public input and feedback, including complaints, concerns and questions regarding the project. The system would also be used to measure community response before, during and after the demonstration project.

Additional objectives included:

- dispelling rumors and misinformation,
- reinforcing public messages by the Heli-Star team,
- providing data as part of research project, and
- meeting FAA requirement for opportunity for public comments.

The Community Response System would provide a readily available means for interested individuals to find out more about the project and register their comments. The system was expected to assist the team in evaluating community reaction during each phase of the project. It was designed to allow the team to avert a crisis by quickly determining issues and areas of concern and responding to them.

The Community Response System would identify concerns, locations and magnitude of concerns. The plan proposed advertising the system to provide maximum opportunity for comments. Input obtained would guide the team in determining the outreach requirements throughout the process.

The system was to be established using existing "complaint lines" where feasible at area airports and the FAA. In addition, a specific line was to be established for this project, either through the FAA or independently to provide information and obtain comments regarding the project. A communications protocol would be established with each airport, city and FAA facility in the event they received inquiries, to ensure that the team received the input and/or that callers would be referred to the Heli-Star response line.

Participants in this Community Response System would include:

- Hartsfield Airport
- PDK
- Charlie Brown Airport
- City of Roswell
- City of Atlanta
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- FAA, Southern Region
- FAA, FSDO
- Heli-Star Community response line
- Local law enforcement and fire departments

A script was to be developed, along with a comment form, to ensure that standard information would be given out and obtained during the project. In addition, periodic contact would be made with the other participants in the Community Response System during the project to obtain feedback which might not be readily apparent from comment sheets. The Steering Committee was intended to be instrumental in developing and implementing this system. The Steering Committee would also provide valuable feedback in monitoring the comments.

A community response information form was needed which included the following information to compile research data for the project:

- Date of call,
- Time of call,
- Geographic location: zip code or cross streets,
- First time calling or repeat (if repeat, number of times called),
- Name, address, phone number,
- Whether it is a comment, complaint or request for information,
- Whether it is about Heli-Star project or other issue,
- Whether it is a helicopter or fixed wing - type, N number, color, other description,
- Whether it is low altitude, safety concern, frequent overflight, noisy, off flight track, early/late flight, over home, over recreational area, invasion of privacy, or other,
- Action requested:   wants information  
                              requires appropriate airport phone number  
                              wants call back  
                              send fax  
                              send letter  
                              needs personal follow-up  
                              other follow-up needed.

### PROPOSED MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Community Involvement Team would coordinate and facilitate meetings with local officials, their staffs as well as with interested publics on an as needed basis. Presentations were also to be facilitated with the involvement of the members of the technical team. Public meetings and presentations were to be conducted at the recommendation of members of the Steering Committee, public officials, local civic organizations, members of the Heli-Star team or upon request of an interested party. Input from these meetings was to be used to mitigate local concerns and if appropriate, modify the project to be more compatible. Meeting highlights would document key issues and comments from each meeting.

Meeting formats would be determined based on the audience and purpose of the meeting:

- One-on-one meetings provide opportunities for two-way communication which maximizes candid discussions and feedback. Messages can be tailored to the audience, trust can be built

and there is usually greater opportunities to explore issues and work through concerns. Drawbacks to one-on-one meetings are that they are time consuming and may lack consistency of information.

- Small group meetings also provide extensive opportunity for two-way discussions and help to build stakeholders' ownership in the process. Group dynamics can increase issues identified and provide greater insight into issues and benefits.
- Presentations provide the opportunity to brief a group on the Heli-Star project, conveying predetermined information in a controlled manner. The disadvantage is that audiences have less opportunity to participate and therefore have less sense of ownership in the process. It is more difficult to tailor the briefing to specific interests and often is perceived to be less interesting.
- Workshops offer maximum opportunities for stakeholders to participate in a large group format. Methods include issue discussion/exercises, brainstorming, issue prioritizing and multiple stations with project experts. Workshops give opportunities to establish relationships between the project team and stakeholders.

The majority, if not all, of the proposed meetings would be conducted in one of the first three formats. It was not anticipated that any large public meeting would be required. If a need was identified, however, the workshop format would be used.

#### OUTREACH PRINTED MATERIAL

All public relations material was to be coordinated with and approved through the Public Affairs office of the ASO. Specific printed pieces, which would be developed for the community involvement program, included a fact sheet and an information packet to be used as part of the Community Response System.

#### COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Communication protocols were developed to ensure efficient, effective flow of information between agencies, team members and community involvement contacts.

The goal of this coordination was to provide timely feedback to the necessary entity regarding project status or community concerns. Because the Heli-Star team was comprised of a large and geographically diverse group, it was imperative to the success of the project that all interests had ready access to project changes as well as and mechanisms to handle community issues.

#### COMMUNICATION CHAIN

To facilitate coordination and project management, community involvement coordination would be facilitated through the FAA AND-710 office in Washington D.C. Public affairs and public



relations activities would be coordinated through the ASO Public Affairs office. Both offices would closely coordinate all community involvement and public relations activities as the project progressed.

### SCHEDULED TELECONS

The first level of communication protocol implemented was weekly teleconferences between the Heli-Star team members. This gave the team the opportunity, each week, to discuss technical updates as well as community outreach plans and issues.

### STAKEHOLDER DATABASE

To most effectively maintain contact with each individual and agency, a database was developed to incorporate basic information as well as periodic input and comments from key stakeholders. A stakeholder is an organization or a person who can affect the outcome of the Heli-Star project or who will be affected by the outcome of Heli-Star. Each entry would also include a point of contact within the team so that proper coordination could take place. This database was to be available to Heli-Star team members for their use. It would be updated throughout the project. The preliminary database included the following groups:

- airport managers,
- City of Atlanta planning department staff,
- City of Atlanta public officials,
- county commissions,
- FAA region,
- FAA FSDO, towers,
- Chambers of Commerce,
- ACOG,
- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC),
- land use planners,
- other transportation and planning projects,
- GEMA,
- Georgia DOT,
- Atlanta Vertical Flight Association,
- Atlanta Roundtable,
- Central Atlanta Progress (CAP),
- heliport sites: e.g., malls,
- neighborhood watch groups,
- homeowner associations, and
- community activists.

### MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

As part of the Community Involvement Plan, each meeting with the Steering Committee as well as other community meetings would be summarized in Meeting Highlights (Exhibit 2). This summary would document meeting participants, subjects, issues raised and actions required.

## Exhibit 2

### Heli-Star Steering Committee Meeting Highlights

Meeting with: ASTS Steering Committee  
Attendance: See attached attendance list

Meeting Date: June 20, 1996  
Location: Fulton County Airport  
Notes By: Christine Eberhard

#### Summary

Eileen Verna welcomed the group and asked for introductions. Steve Alogna gave the group an update on FAA Southern Region's planning efforts for the Olympics. He indicated the all mobile towers are in place. The slot reservation system has been operating since May with 1,000 operations to date. Steve handed out information from the FAA for airport managers and operators regarding airfield security. Eileen Verna told the group the new name for the ASTS project is Heli-STAR. She indicated that all the landing zones are complete. The avionics suite has been STC'ed. Approximately 50% of the avionics have been installed. The cargo operation starts on July 19. The group discussed the requests from public officials and other VIP's regarding tours of the Project Operations Center. Chuck provided the group with an overview and hand-out of each heliport site, including a photo and layout. Most of the sites are prepared. He highlighted the sites that still need construction. All the sites will have lights and a wind sock. All sites will be flown next week and all VASI's will be turned on next week. There will be a computer (486) at each site with modems, telephone and land lines. Extreme measures have been taken to reduce problems and issues for the landing zone captains. Chuck reminded the group what a unique partnership this is, particularly on the part of the shipping community. Equipment and weather contingencies will continue to be an issue. Christine Eberhard updated the group on the Community Response System, including the comment and follow-up forms, and coordination between the Steering Committee network. She indicated the phone number will be (770) 528-7838. The Community Response System will take all helicopter calls for the first seven days. This will be evaluated at the end of the first seven days to determine the effectiveness of the system based on the volume of calls.

#### Questions Asked:

- Will ACOG be flying in the Wolf Creek area? (to Billy Smith)
- The green book indicates information on the slot system. Is 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. still accurate? (Alogna)
- Is the Briscoe tower going to be temporary or will the new one be operating? (Alogna)
- Do local based aircraft operations need a slot reservation? (Alogna)
- Are the STC's strictly for the research project?
- Is any equipment installed at our airport going to be left after the project?
- What about passengers coming into Roswell? How will they be accommodated within the cargo operation?
- Where will the noise monitors be in relation to the sites?
- How will each aircraft be identified?

#### Issues Raised:

- Atlanta Chamber might be interested in having a tour of the POC, because recently there has been additional interest in airports.
- The Steering Committee may want city officials and other key people to have a tour for post-Olympic benefits.
- FTY needs a security gate near the heliport site.
- Not everyone has an 800 MHz. system (ACOG).
- Are refueling sites only at PDK? Will there be a fueling truck at Universal?
- Passenger security issues at landing sites in conjunction with cargo operations.
- Are there back-up helicopters in event of mechanicals?
- What is the earliest flight (6:00 a.m.)? What is the latest recovery (10:30 p.m.)? How many ASTS helipads are there in Dekalb County?
- Concern that a few complaints could make the entire project look bad.

###

## COMMUNICATION WITH OFFICIALS

Various members of the Heli-STAR team were to have conversations with public officials as well as the official's staff. To maintain effective team coordination, the Community Involvement Plan required that any conversations with these officials be communicated to the AND-710 Community Involvement team member and CommuniQuest as well as ASO. If possible, this coordination was to take place prior to communication with the official. The project manager from FAA, AND-710 would facilitate the meeting or discussion as well as alert appropriate team or Steering Committee members.

## COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

Any communication with the media was to be coordinated through the ASO Public Affairs office. In the event that an informal discussion or telephone call was received, the FAA, Southern Region (ASO) Public Affairs office would be advised immediately. The ASO would then notify AND-710 and CommuniQuest as well as any other appropriate team member. The ASO Public Affairs office would act as official spokesperson for the Heli-STAR project with the media. However, the ASO Olympics project officer and the AND-710 project officer may be called on to represent the Heli-STAR team with the media. All other team members would refer media calls to one of these three offices.

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM

Feedback mechanisms were proposed to be part of the Community Response System to ensure sufficient coordination throughout the Heli-STAR operation. This communication link was one of the most important elements in the Community Involvement Program. It was essential in order to provide a mechanism for interested publics to obtain additional information or log comments. It would also be critical to provide these people with timely response.

A comment form was planned as part of the development (Exhibit 3) to obtain information from anyone calling regarding the project. Communication protocols were planned to ensure that each call received a rapid response to address any issue or concern. Each call and each response would be documented and become part of the final report

## COMMENT TRACKING SYSTEM

All comment forms and meeting summaries would be evaluated. Comments from meetings would be merged with comments from the forms to track key issues and concerns throughout the project as part of the research analysis. A follow up form was also developed to ensure sufficient response has been given to each inquiry (Exhibit 4).

**Exhibit 3**

**Heli-STAR Project Comment Report**

Mr./Ms.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (last, first)

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Call: \_\_\_\_\_ (xx/xx/xx) Incident Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (xx/xx/xx)

Incident Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (military time) First Time Calling?: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)

In Person?: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no) # of Prior Calls: \_\_\_\_\_ Same Reason?: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)

Reason Calling: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number)

- |               |                      |                         |           |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1 = Heli-STAR | 4 = Low Flying       | 7 = Frequent Overflight | 9 = Other |
| 2 = Safety    | 5 = Orbiting         | 8 = Early/Late Flight   |           |
| 3 = Noise     | 6 = Off Flight Track |                         |           |

Explain Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Heli-STAR Helicopter?: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no) Non-Heli-STAR?: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in # if applicable)

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1 = Helicopter | 4 = Private |
| 2 = Airline    | 5 = Jet     |
| 3 = Military   | 6 = Unknown |

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number)

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 = Clear    | 4 = Thunderstorms |
| 2 = Overcast | 5 = Fog           |
| 3 = Rain     | 6 = Windy         |

Aircraft Size: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number)

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 1 = bubble | 4 = large |
| 2 = light  | 5 = Other |
| 3 = medium |           |

Estimated Altitude: \_\_\_\_\_ (x,xxx')

Describe Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight Direction: \_\_\_\_\_

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Requested: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number)

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 = Wants information on Heli-STAR | 4 = Send Letter               |
| 2 = Requested airport phone number | 5 = Send information via fax  |
| 3 = Wants a call back              | 6 = Needs in-person follow-up |

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments Received By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (xx/xx/xx)

Network Series: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number) Describe Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- |               |                          |                          |                           |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 = POC       | 6 = FAA Airp. Dist. Off. | 11 = Law Enforc. Ag.     | 16 = Cobb County. Airp    |
| 2 = GTRI      | 7 = ACOG                 | 12 = Fire Dept.          | 17 = Fult. County Airport |
| 3 = FAA ASO   | 8 = AVFA                 | 13 = Local City          | 18 = GEMA                 |
| 4 = FAA FSDO  | 9 = Alt. Reg. Comm.      | 14 = Harts. Atl. Airport | 19 = Other facility       |
| 5 = FAA Tower | 10 = Heliport Owner      | 15 = PDK                 |                           |

**Exhibit 4**

**Heli-STAR Response Form  
To Follow-Up Inquiry**

Inquiry Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (xx/xx/xx)

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (military time)

Mr./Ms./ (caller): \_\_\_\_\_

Callers Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (last, first)

Action Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Actions Required

Observe Computer: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no/pending) I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Route/Location: _____ (# of Route or Location)	Describe Other: _____
1 - 8 + Routes 1 - 8	12 = PDK 16 = GEMA 20 = Roswell
9 = Atl. Harts. Airp.	13 = Ful. Cty. Airp. 17 = Nat. Bank/Mitchell St. 21 = Other
10 = A.J.C./Norcross	14 = Galleria 18 = Nat. Bank/Southside
11 = Capitol	15 = GA. Bap. Hosp. 19 = Nat. Bank/Northeast

Explanation of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with POC: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no/pending)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with PHI Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no/pending)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Alert Team Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no/pending)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with Steering Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no/pending)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up with Public Inquiry

(date)	Satisfaction of Caller (put an X in one of 3 boxes)			(if required)
Prov. Immed Info: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Prov Call Back: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Sent 1st Letter: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Sent 2nd Letter: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Gave Airp. #: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Prov In-Per F-Up: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____
Other: _____	Satisfied: _____	Unsatisfied: _____	Need Info: _____	Foll-Up Date: _____

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Heli-STAR Research Requirements

Comment Form: \_\_\_\_\_ (completed?)  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Form: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinate with POC/Heli-STAR: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Com./Coord. with Public: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded Information: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Evolution of The Plan**

In the FAA's preliminary plan for community involvement, the workscope included extensive outreach to include meetings and presentations in many of the local communities in and around Atlanta. These meetings were to include small group meetings as well as larger community meetings to ensure that local residents and public officials were aware of the Heli-STAR project.

The FAA's original goal for this outreach, as described on the preceding pages, was intended to meet the newly implemented FAA Community Involvement Policy requirements. However, as the Heli-STAR planning process for both the technical work and the community involvement progressed, it became evident that such an extensive outreach process was not required. It was determined that as a temporary project, community acceptance was not necessary since any local impacts would be eliminated after the three-week period.

#### **REVISED WORKSCOPE AND TASKS**

Therefore, the requirement for a citizens advisory group was removed from the plan, as well as most of the community meetings. However, the FAA recognized the continuing need for two specific aspects of the Community Involvement Plan: the Steering Committee and the Community Response System.

Emphasis was put on the need to keep key community leaders apprised of the Heli-STAR project so if any significant impacts occurred, effective channels for communication and coordination would be in place to deal with issues and concerns that could arise. This became the primary function of the Steering Committee.

In addition, the FAA recognized the need to ensure that local residents and local communities were not unduly impacted by the Heli-STAR project, and that if questions and concerns did arise, there would be a focal point to take the concerns and address issues. This was the function of the Community Response System.

CommuniQuest was tasked with overall guidance and expertise for community outreach prior to and during the Heli-STAR project. As such, continuing communication and coordination would be conducted between CommuniQuest and Eileen Verna, FAA, AND-710, Kathleen Bergen, ASO, and Suzanne Anderson, Helicopter Association International (HAI). Each team member would be advised of meetings regarding public relations and community relations as well as updates regarding the project and any changes in strategies.

#### **REVISED OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the community outreach portion of the Heli-STAR project was two-fold. The first objective was to provide sufficient expertise to the team as well as information to local communities so that local residents or officials are not surprised either by the project or by increased helicopter activity. Mechanisms needed to be in place to address impacts and concerns regarding the project and any operations. Second, the community relations effort was to provide

sufficient outreach to establish guidelines and to be a model for future projects. Therefore, this revised workscope recognizes the need to provide low risk mechanisms for providing awareness and receiving input without asking for involvement or acceptance. Each task was designed to meet the overall objectives without jeopardizing the project.

#### REVISED GOALS FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The revised goals for the community outreach program were to:

- Provide a coordinated effort between the key public relations and community relations team members to ensure that each Heli-STAR partners were advised of meetings, project changes as well as community concerns.
- Develop mechanisms to effectively address any issue, concern or complaint received from a public official or resident prior to, or during, the Olympics regarding the Heli-STAR project.
- Provide a forum for public agencies to give input to the Heli-STAR team and feedback from their communities and constituents to Heli-STAR project.
- Ensure that the Community Involvement Team was involved in strategy discussions prior to making decisions that would affect local communities.

#### SPECIFIC TASKS DELEGATED TO COMMUNIQUEST

The specific tasks delegated to CommuniQuest were to:

- Monitor community awareness and community response to Heli-STAR project prior to, and during, the Olympics in conjunction with GTRI. Work with GTRI in developing the system for public referrals.
- Provide a one-day training course to the Heli-STAR team on community relations and conflict resolution.
- Coordinate meetings of the Heli-STAR Steering Committee and coordinate with individual members as needed prior to and during the Olympics.
- Provide community outreach guidance and expertise to Heli-STAR team members as requested and needed.
- In conjunction with the Heli-STAR team, review all public relations material prior to distribution and provide comments.

- Assist GTRI and the team in working with the Steering Committee and appropriate agencies to ensure they have sufficient information regarding the Heli-STAR project in the event of inquiries prior to and during the Olympics.
- In conjunction with GTRI and SAIC, develop demographics for each heliport site and airport as part of data collection and final report.
- As a professional facilitator and mediator, CommuniQuest would provide these services at community and team meetings as needed and requested.



#### **IV. Community Involvement Methodology**

The methodology used to develop the Community Involvement Plan was based on the following twelve steps:

1. Conduct research and reconnaissance.
2. Develop an operating structure.
3. Develop community interface guidelines.
4. Conduct community involvement/media training for team.
5. Develop a steering committee.
6. Obtain local demographic information.
7. Conduct community awareness meetings.
8. Develop a community response system.
9. Implement steering committee and a community response system.
10. Meet with local officials and staffs.
11. Hold meetings and presentations as, needed and requested.
12. Implement public relations outreach through FAA, Southern Region.

##### **PHASE ONE (May - October 1995)**

To initiate the project and as a forerunner to developing the Community Involvement Plan, extensive outreach was conducted with local organizations and individuals to determine key stakeholders in the greater Atlanta region. From this research, a database was developed for use throughout the plan. This database would continually be updated as the project developed.

Local demographics was another area discussed in these input sessions. Information regarding local communities in the vicinity of each proposed heliport site, route and airport was obtained and included in the original plan. As the first stages of the research began, a process structure was developed and is included in the plan (Exhibit 1).

In the meetings with local cities, airports and interested organizations, the proposed structure was discussed for input and feedback. Various elements of the project and specifically the Community Involvement plan, were discussed and input was received.

The first phase culminated in the formation of a Steering Committee. A preliminary meeting was held to discuss the role and requirements of this group. As a result of this informal meeting, the Steering Committee was formed.

In addition to this outreach to validate the proposed process and to gain insight into local stakeholders and issues, communication protocols were established to facilitate coordination between agencies as well as members of the Steering Committee.

The final product of Phase One was the Community Involvement Plan. It outlined the team effort and provided guidance for the project during the next 15 months.

## SYNOPSIS OF ISSUES AS A RESULT OF PHASE ONE RESEARCH

Meetings and research regarding local community concerns resulted in a preliminary analysis of issues which could have required mitigation as part of the Heli-STAR project development.

Meetings were held with:

- City of Atlanta
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- City of Roswell
- Dekalb Peachtree Airport
- Fulton County Airport
- KXIA TV pilot/reporter
- Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport
- Georgia Emergency Management Agency
- FAA, Southern Region

As a result of the initial discussions with these key stakeholders, the following issues were identified and anticipated as being of most concern:

- How to implement the project at airports and heliport sites with existing noise issues,
- How to address multitude of aircraft in Atlanta region for the Olympics, but not related to the Heli-STAR project, yet impacting perception of project,
- How to overcome the issue that helicopters would be used only for the affluent and celebrities and would not be of benefit to most local residents,
- How to address helicopter routes to ensure that they are noise sensitive,
- How to reduce the impact of military helicopters, and
- How to inform local communities that the project is because of the Olympics and will provide security, law enforcement and emergency response services?

In addition, based on experience with other local communities, anticipated issues regarding helicopter activities, commonly fall into one of the following areas:

- Low flight altitude, particularly in the vicinity of an airport or heliport site,
- Noisy aircraft,
- Invasion of privacy issues,
- Frequent overflights, and
- Late night, early morning flights
- Safety concerns
- Lack of local community control over operations
- Lack of ownership in the process

In preparing the technical members of the Heli-STAR team to work with local communities, the following questions were developed based on past experience. These are questions commonly asked by local residents and public officials at public meetings regarding helicopter activity:

1. When, where, who is flying?
2. How many operations will be over my house, my city (frequency of flight - cumulative effect)?
3. How many operations will be on a specific route, i.e., in and out of, a specific heliport?
4. What time of day will the operations be?
5. What kind of aircraft will be used?
6. Who can we complain to? What will happen if I complain?
7. What is meant by "temporary"?
8. What altitudes are they (will they be) flying?
9. How will noise be measured?
10. What controls (power) do we have? How can we control helicopters?
11. What are the impacts? How will they be reduced (mitigated)?
12. How can we identify helicopters?
13. Who approved this (project)? Who is involved?
14. Why weren't we involved?
15. Who is making money off the project?
16. Helicopters don't have a good safety record—do they?
17. Who and how are helicopters controlled in the sky? How do they stay separated from other aircraft?

#### PHASE TWO (February - June 1996)

During this phase, all aspects of the community involvement program were operating and responding to the Steering Committee as well as to other local requests for meetings and

presentations. Information received during this phase of involvement was carefully evaluated and where appropriate, incorporated in the project.

Publicity regarding the project and community outreach efforts was initiated near the end of this phase.

The Community Involvement Team worked closely with the technical team during this phase to address potential concerns early-on and to meet the local needs for information or modification of project plans.

### PHASE THREE (July - August 1996)

The Community Involvement Team was posed to respond to interested publics during this active phase of the project.

In addition to addressing issues and concerns immediately prior to, and during, the Olympic games, the Community Response System was to be a focal point for the Community Involvement Team. This system was to provide valuable information for the team in terms of where, when, what, and the extent of concerns regarding any aspect of the project. It provided direct response to local residents who called with concerns.

### PHASE FOUR (August 1996 - January 1997)

Following the Olympic games, the Community Involvement Team would continue to obtain input from the Steering Committee and other interested parties. Each Steering Committee member provided feedback to the Community Involvement team at the completion of the project.

During this phase, evaluation of the measurement criteria from the Community Response System was conducted and analyzed. Coordination of this data would be accomplished with the Steering Committee as well as other interested or affected parties.

Phase four would culminate with this report regarding the community involvement program.

## **V. Community Involvement Plan Implementation**

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAM TRAINING**

As part of the Heli-STAR community outreach, team members were continually briefed on community involvement plans and developments. Careful coordination occurred among the various elements of the technical team, local FAA representatives and the community involvement representatives. All aspects of the team were trained to be aware of the objectives and necessity of community involvement.

In addition, community involvement was included as part of the training to all participants in the Heli-STAR project. CommuniQuest conducted training to all pilots as part of the pilot and operator training sessions.

The level of coordination between team members, as well as the inclusion of a community involvement aspect in the training, demonstrated the level of interest and importance that project management placed on community involvement.

### **COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The community response system was developed, as described above, to contain any community issues or concerns that might arise due to the Heli-STAR project. Documenting these calls and the follow-up was the primary focus of the data collection effort. The results of this data collection is discussed under the Data Analysis portion of this report.

The community response comment form evolved during the course of planning (Exhibit 3). It continued to be refined during the first few phone calls to best meet the needs of the data collection. In addition to this form, a response form was developed and implemented so that inquiries could be tracked for follow-up.

The sequence of procedures were used in the Community Response operation included the following steps:

1. A call was recorded on the comment form.
2. The inquiry and any concerns were discussed with the Project Operations Center (POC), Petroleum Helicopters Incorporated (PHI) (the helicopter operator for Heli-STAR) and whoever else might be appropriate.
3. Through the discussions with the POC and appropriate agencies, the community response team would determine the aircraft involved and an explanation for the incident.
4. Based on the information received through the investigation, the community response staff called the individual back with the information gathered through the research.

5. The follow-up form was then filled out to track any additional feedback or follow-up that might be required either with the caller or the Heli-STAR network.
6. The call log was also filled out to keep track of each call to the system.
7. A pin was be added to the Noise Sensitive Map for any call regarding a noise complaint.
8. The staff would call the Heli-STAR network member, if appropriate, to alert them to the fact that an inquiry had come from their area and to provide information on what response had been given to the caller.
9. Copies of each comment form and follow-up form were made and distributed to the project team as well as the appropriate member of the Steering Committee.
10. A status report was kept each day to record additional data regarding other information or situations existing as part of the Community Response System.
11. Every individual who called the system, received a call back within two days to check on the situation and if the concern had been addressed.
12. Coordination also took place with the GTRI acoustics staff regarding noise data collection and inquiries.
13. The community response staff also visited the local airports and the Steering Committee network to talk with the airport staff, pilots and FAA personnel regarding local issues. In addition, staff noted aircraft paint schemes and "N" numbers (registration number) to more easily identify aircraft when receiving an inquiry from the community.

#### HELI-STAR COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM OPERATING PROCEDURES

The community response phone line was operational 24 hours daily answered by either staff personnel or answering machine. The primary contact person checked the machine every couple of hours, seven days a week. Specific information was needed from each caller. In addition, many callers were upset and frustrated and required careful listening and skillful responses. Each call received a response within a few hours. Once the basic information was obtained, the call was investigated. When the investigation was complete, the individual received a call back with information.

The watch commander would advise the community response office of any unusual helicopter or heliport activity. This provided advance notice of possible calls from local residents.

If anyone called other telephone numbers in the Project Operations Center, the caller would be referred to the community response phone number. If that was not possible for some reason, they were to get a phone number from the caller and page the response staff.

The community response phone line received calls regarding all helicopter activity in the Atlanta area, not just Heli-STAR. Callers obtained the number from area airports, the FAA or their local city hall.

Media inquiries were directed to ASO, Kathleen Bergen, (404) 305-5101. Any calls from a public official were referred to the FAA project manager, but community involvement was also notified.

A week prior to project start-up, the following letter (Exhibit 5) was sent to all participants and members of the network.

### **Exhibit 5 Follow-Up Letter**

*July 8, 1996*

*Dear member of the Heli-STAR/Heli-STAR network:*

*With only nine days to go, we are in final preparations and the project is ready for implementation. All our planning efforts are paying off and we look forward to a productive month ahead.*

*As you know, a critical part of this research project involves evaluating community response to the Heli-STAR operation. With that in mind, attached please find basic information on the project as well as our Community Response System phone number.*

*This phone line will be operational beginning, July 11 and will be effective until August 6, 1996. Any inquiries you receive regarding the Heli-STAR project or helicopter activity at your facility or in your area can be directed to this phone line. Christine Eberhard will be the contact person. She will be available to talk with either your staff or to a member of the public regarding the project and accompanying helicopter activity.*

*The Community Response System will provide us with detailed information regarding public interest in the project, and we want to be sure and capture any inquiries your organization may receive from the public. It will be most helpful if you can pass this information on to whoever in your organization is likely to receive calls from the public.*

*On behalf of the entire team, I thank you for your continued support of this project. I hope that this Community Response System will provide an effective outreach tool at the same time reducing your staff's workload during this hectic time.*

*Sincerely,*

*cc: Heli-STAR Steering Committee  
AVFA  
Participating Helicopter Operators  
FAA ATCTs at ATL, PDK, FTY, FAA ATL FSDO*

## INTERFACE WITH ACOUSTICS STAFF AT GTRI

As part of the community outreach effort, the team met with the acoustics staff at GTRI prior to, as well as throughout the project. The early-on interface provided opportunities for the acoustics staff at GTRI and the community involvement staff to compare plans for the project. Based on this coordination, the community involvement staff was better able to provide meaningful input during the project for the noise analysis.

Members of the GTRI acoustics staff routinely visited the community response system office during the project to obtain information on calls and to provide timely feedback regarding their findings. The community involvement staff distributed a copy of every noise inquiry to the GTRI acoustics staff on a daily basis.

On several occasions the GTRI staff attempted to conduct noise monitoring at the site of one of the callers based on prior coordination through the community response system office. However, in most cases the concern regarding noise had been reduced or eliminated by the time the noise monitoring team could reach the resident.

The acknowledgment of this dual track by the project management team greatly enhanced the community outreach effort. Noise measurement alone does not address community concerns. It can validate that there are noise issues and attempt to measure the magnitude of the noise levels. However, this is only one aspect of the noise issue. Without the community outreach and the response system, residents and community leaders often become frustrated with the noise measurement analysis. On the one hand, verifying there is a noise concern is valuable, but it also is a sensitive issue. A resident, when presented with noise data, will often say, "I know the aircraft makes noise - I have been telling you that. I want something done about it."

Use of the noise data also requires careful consideration. Just because noise measurements indicate that aircraft are not producing significant noise levels does not indicate that the resident does not have valid concerns. Therefore, it is with careful study and through a combined team effort that effective outreach and resolution to noise issues can be accomplished.



## **VI. Data Collection Findings**

The community response phone system was functional between July 11 and August 2, 1996. It was particularly effective because of the real time problem-solving capability. This was made possible because the response system was located in the POC. The community response staff was able to interface with the operations staff and observe the tracking system while the caller was on the phone. This provided the caller with an immediate response as well as the sense that there was some control of the aircraft over their home.

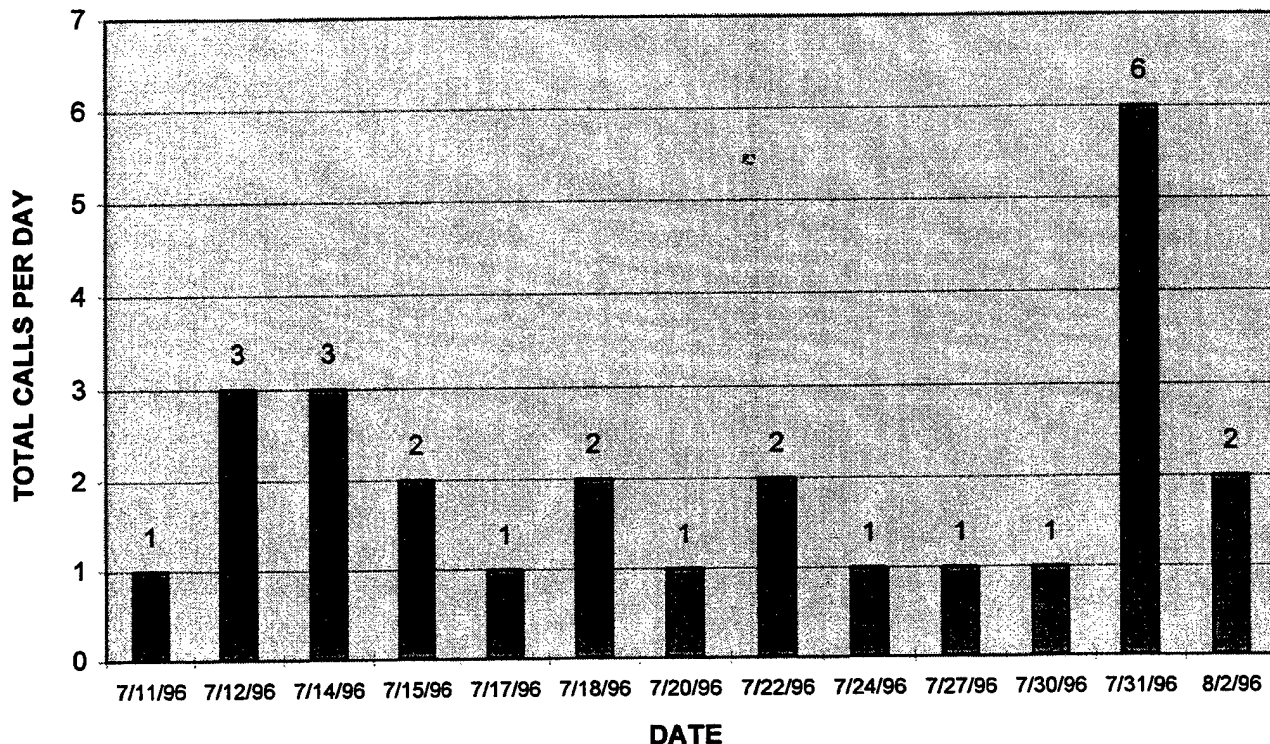
Total number of calls into the community response system was 48. Of those, nine were from Steering Committee members. The remaining 39 calls were from 25 residents. Noise was the dominant reason people called the response line. Other concerns included safety, low-flying helicopters, orbiting helicopters and helicopters off the recommended flight tracks.

A call referred from Nations Bank South was the only call regarding Heli-STAR operations. It was from a gentleman that lived near the heliport at this bank. The brightness of the heliport lights disturbed him at night. Based on coordination through the Heli-STAR response system, project staff were able to shut off the lights each night after the final helicopter operation.

The following pages present a summary of the data collection findings.

A.

### TOTAL INDIVIDUAL CALLS PER DAY Heli-Star

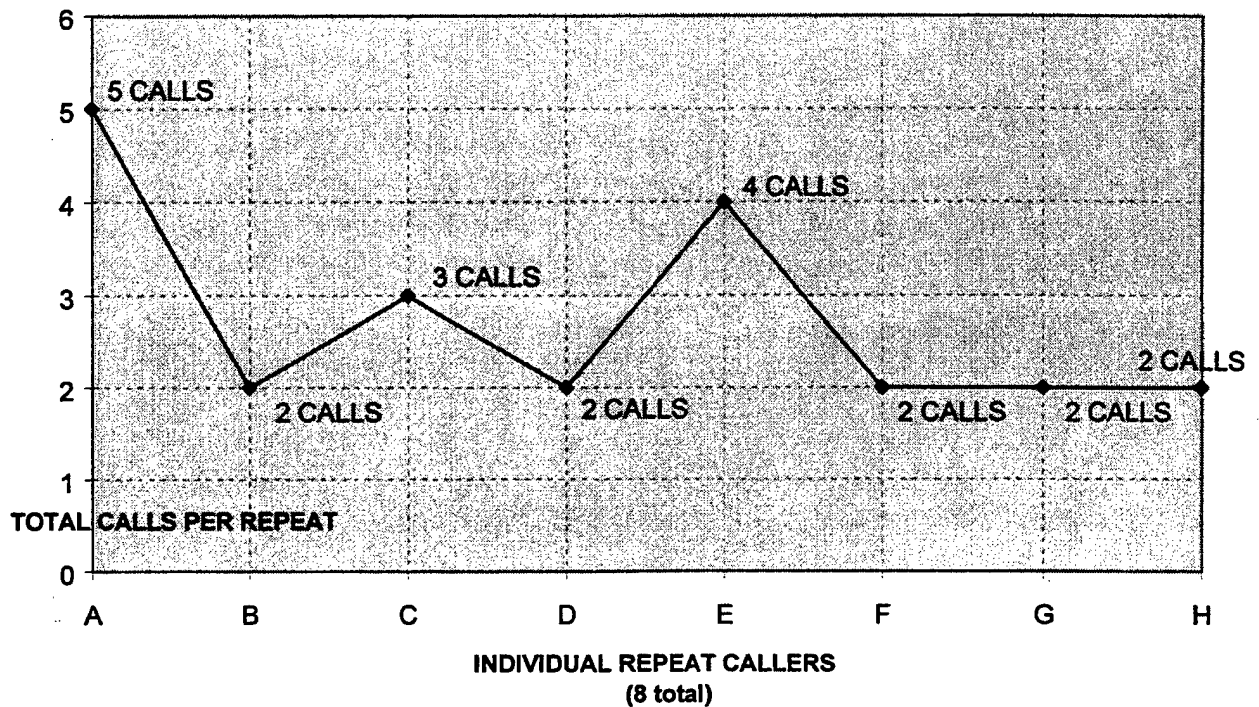


### INDIVIDUAL CALLERS

All calls into the community response phone line regarding helicopter activity were received between July 11 and August 2, 1996. A total of 25 individuals called the community response phone line during this time. Almost half of all incoming calls into the phone line were prior to the actual beginning of the Olympic games. This was largely due to law enforcement and security training flights, preparation and familiarization prior to the games. More calls were received on July 31, 1996 than any other day with a total of 6 calls into the phone line. Incoming calls on this day were made by residents south of PDK because of FBI activity in the area for more than 12 hours. This intensive law enforcement activity was part of the investigation into the bombing in Centennial Park the previous Saturday morning. These residents were concerned with the continuous hovering of helicopters over their houses on Wednesday, July 31. The second busiest days were Friday, July 12 and Sunday, July 14, with three new callers into the phone line. Based on conversations with callers, people seemed more tolerant of helicopter activity in their community on the weekdays and less tolerant on the weekends. Two or less calls were received on the remaining ten days of the project.

B.

### REPEAT CALLERS Heli-STAR

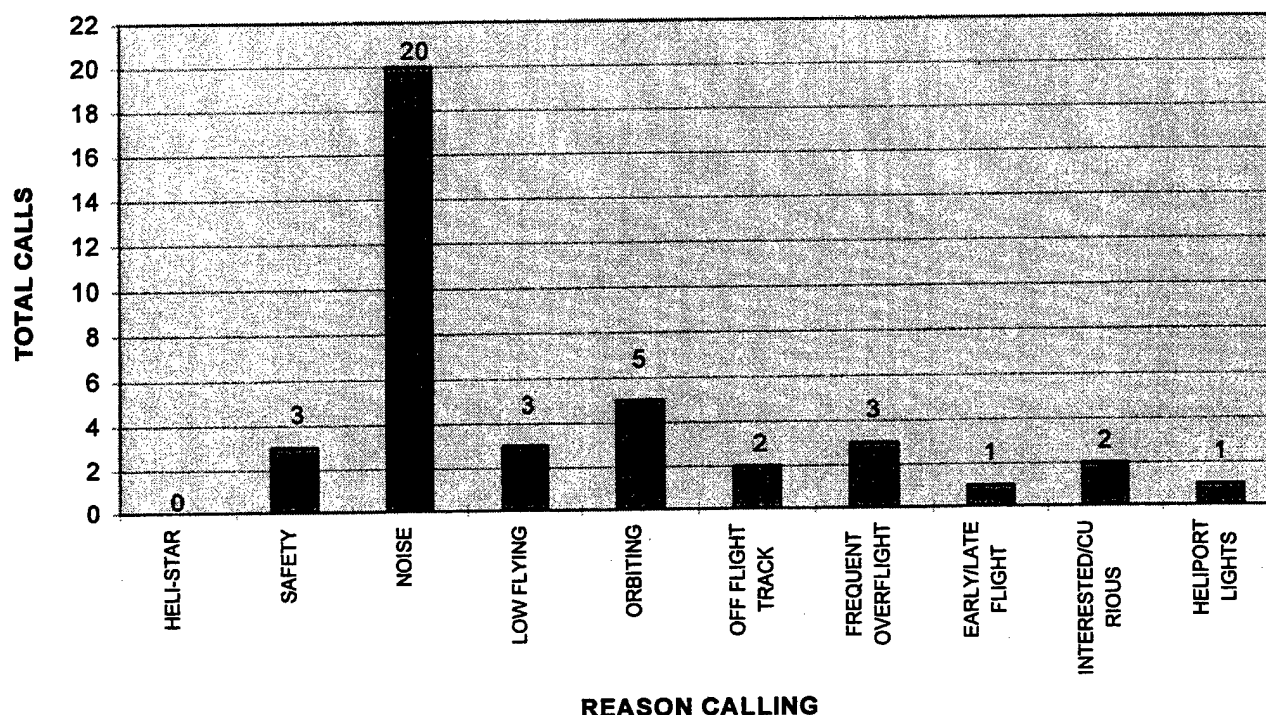


### REPEAT CALLERS

A total of eight people called the community response phone line two or more times between July 11 and August 2, 1996. All repeat calls were regarding the same reason as their first call. As shown above, five out of eight of these callers called a total of two times. Of the balance of repeat callers, one called three times, one four times and one called five times. Total repeat calls into the community response phone line by these eight individuals total 14. Total calls into the phone line, including all individual callers plus any repeat calls made by the above eight people were 48 calls.

C.

### REASON CALLING Heli-STAR



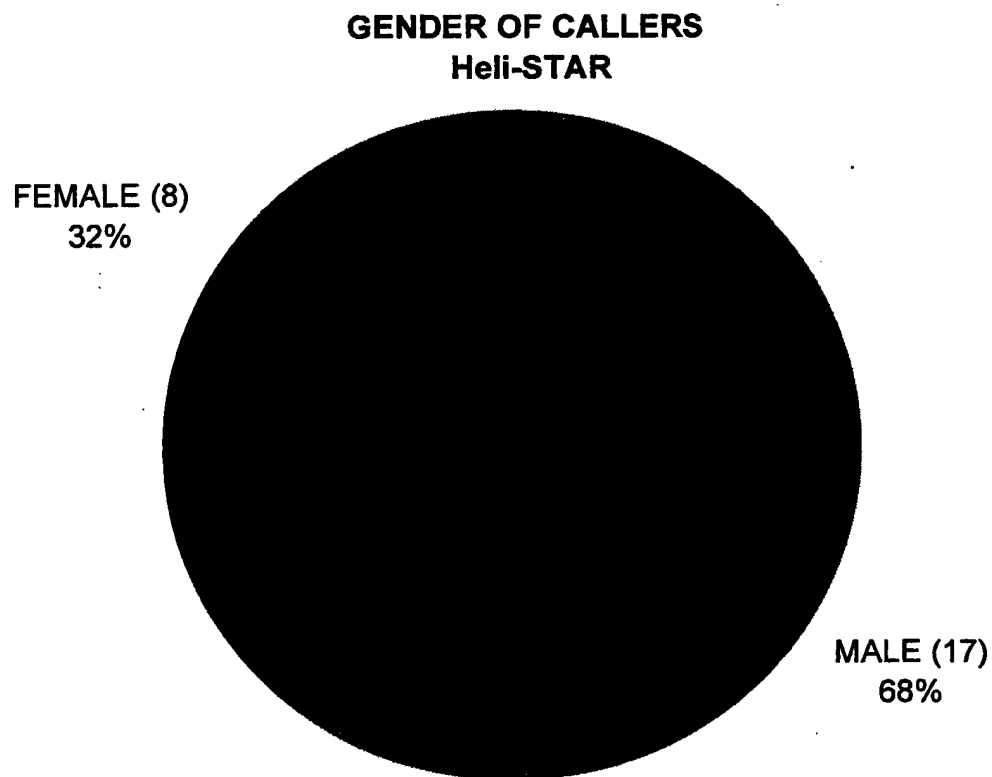
### REASON CALLING

Callers into the community response phone line voiced concern in nine different areas. Several callers were concerned for more than one reason, therefore the total number of reasons for calling is greater than the total number of calls into the response system. Of the 25 individuals who called the phone line, a total of 40 reasons were given. "Noise" was the dominant concern of callers, mentioned in 20 different calls. This represents 50 percent of total reasons for calls into the response line.

"Safety," "low flying" and "frequent overflight" were all mentioned three times, each representing eight percent of all reasons into the response system. "Off flight track" and "interested/curious" were mentioned twice each, representing five percent of the total reasons. Both "early/late flight" and "heliport lights" were mentioned once by callers, each representing three percent of all reasons.

Many callers who gave more than one reason for their call expressed "noise" as a concern. No calls into the community response line were received regarding Heli-STAR aircraft, as reflected on the chart.

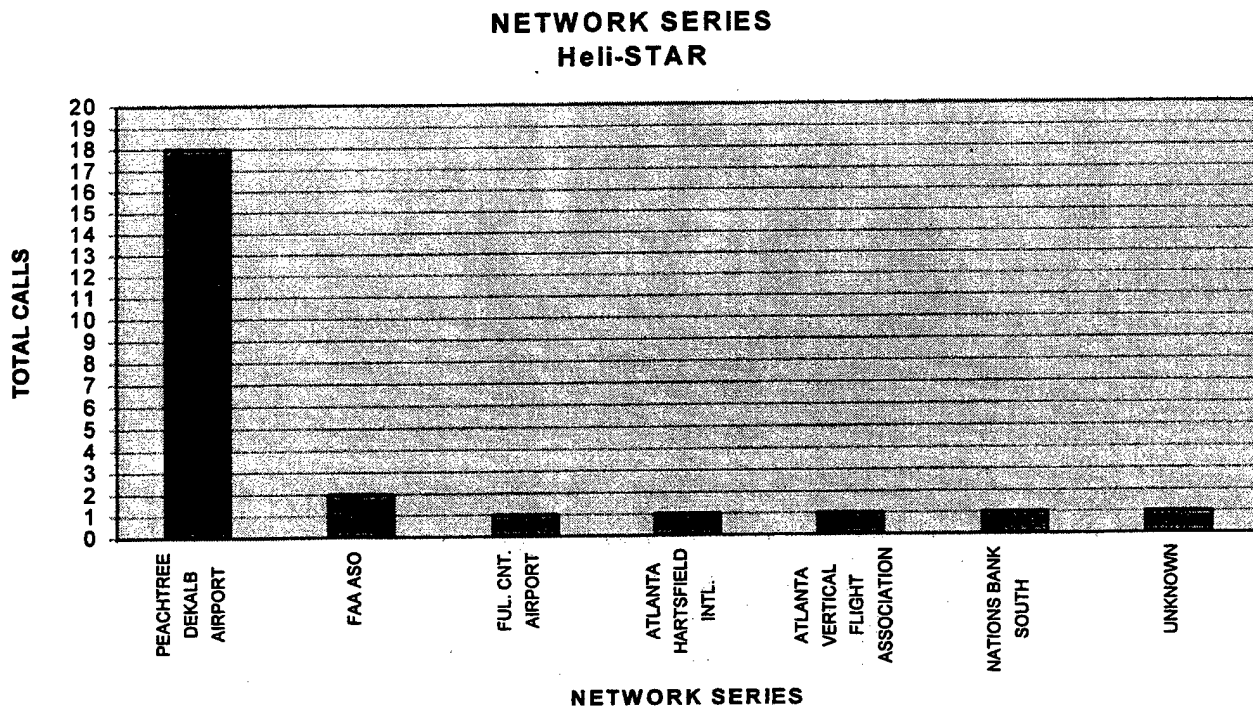
**D.**



**GENDER**

Of all incoming calls to the community response line regarding helicopter activity, 68 percent were placed by men while 32 percent were made by women. Of the eight repeat callers, seven were male and one was female (13 and 87 percent respectively).

E.



### NETWORK SERIES

Locations of seventeen organizations in the Atlanta area were targeted as likely to receive calls regarding helicopter activity (network series). Of the 25 individual callers, 18 (72 percent) were classified as coming from the Peachtree Dekalb Airport (PDK) area. This was because most of the helicopters were based at this airport and therefore most of the Olympic activity was in and out of PDK. In addition, citizens in the PDK area are sophisticated community activists and are used to calling the noise abatement office at the airport. Two calls were referred from FAA Regional Office and one each from Fulton County Airport, Atlanta International Airport, Atlanta Vertical Flight Association and Nations Bank South. One caller did not indicate how he obtained the Heli-STAR response line phone number.

The call referred from Nations Bank South was the only call regarding Heli-STAR operations. It was from a gentleman near the heliport at this bank. The heliport lights disturbed him at night. Based on coordination through the Heli-STAR response system, project staff were able to shut off the lights each night after the final helicopter operation.

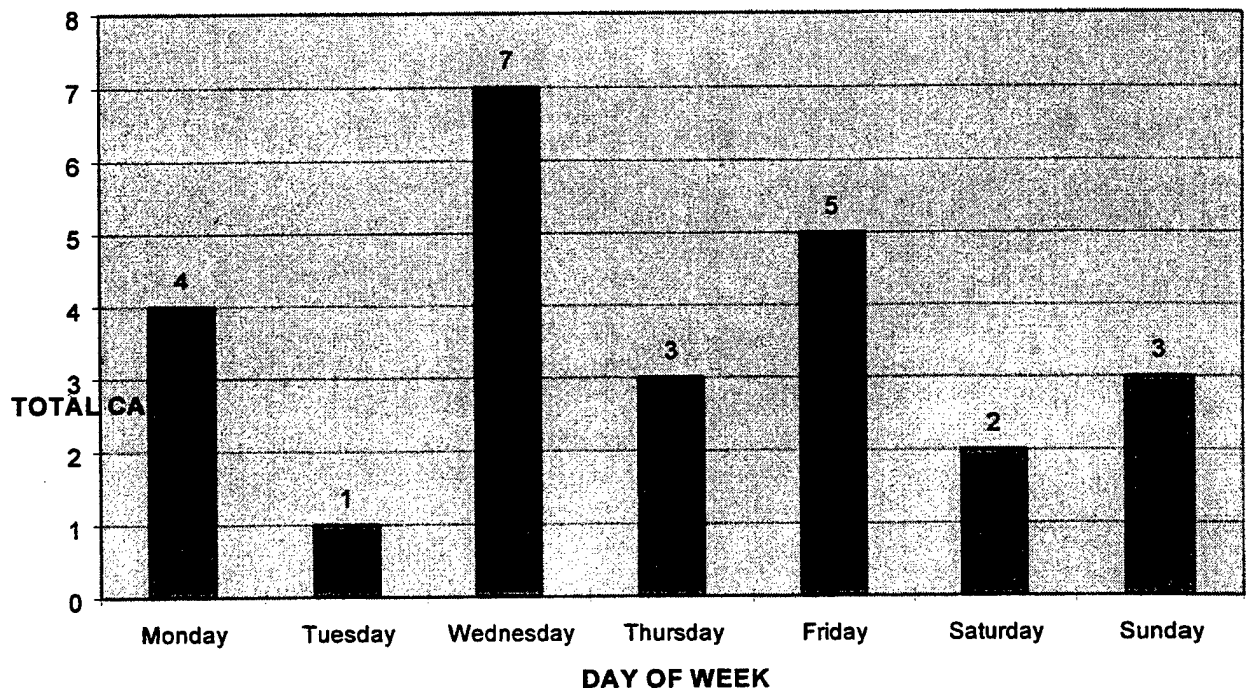
For future projects that include aircraft activity similar to Heli-STAR, it would be helpful to increase the network series to ensure that most, if not all calls regarding aircraft activity, are referred to the community response phone line. Distributing handouts or business cards with community response phone line information to all possible networks would also be helpful in the future.

## HELI-STAR AIRCRAFT

No calls into the community response phone line during the Olympics were in regard to Heli-STAR aircraft. All calls received were regarding media and public security aircraft. These aircraft were involved in covering the Olympics either for the media or for law enforcement and security.

F.

**TOTAL CALLS PER DAY OF WEEK\***  
**7/11/96 -**



### TOTAL CALLS PER DAY OF WEEK \*

More first time calls came in on Wednesday than any other day, with a total of seven calls throughout the Olympics. This was partly due to the calls made by residents south of PDK on Wednesday, July 31, due to intensive law enforcement activity as a result of the bombing in Centennial Park the previous Saturday morning. The second busiest day for calls to the community response line was Friday, with a total of five calls. All five of these calls were about helicopter noise. A total of three calls came into the response line on both Thursdays and Sundays. Tuesday was the least busy day for receiving calls, with only one call throughout the Olympics.

Although a few more calls were received during the week as opposed to the weekends, several callers showed more frustration and less tolerance of helicopter activity on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday—especially Sunday morning.

\* Only includes original call made by each caller.

G.

**CALLS WITH SPECIFIC  
TIME OF INCIDENT  
Heli-STAR**

**INCIDENT DATE INCIDENT TIME**

7/11/96	11:15 p.m.
7/12/96	9:30 p.m.
7/14/96	10:00 a.m.
7/14/96	10:43 a.m.
7/17/96	9:30 a.m.
7/17/96	10:00 p.m.
7/18/96	7:30 a.m.
7/20/96	6:45 a.m.
7/22/96	12:20 p.m.
7/22/96	1:30 p.m.
7/27/96	1:45 p.m.
7/27/96	4:45 p.m.
7/31/96	5:00 p.m.
7/31/96	8:54 a.m.
7/31/96	5:30 p.m.
8/1/96	2:30 p.m.
8/1/96	2:30 p.m.

**CALLS WITH SPECIFIC TIME OF INCIDENT**

Of the 25 callers, 17 specified an exact time of incident which are listed above. The above times are simply when the caller noticed helicopter activity in the area that concerned them. In some cases, the time above was the only time the activity was noticed and in other cases, this is when the caller began noticing activity that continued for a longer duration. Most calls (14) were about incidents that happened during the day (before 5:00 p.m.) The other three callers stated times between 9:30 p.m. and 11:15 p.m. On days with more than one call, most incident times were relatively close together with exception of calls received on July 17 and July 31.



H.

**CALLS WITHOUT SPECIFIC  
TIME OF INCIDENT  
Heli-STAR**

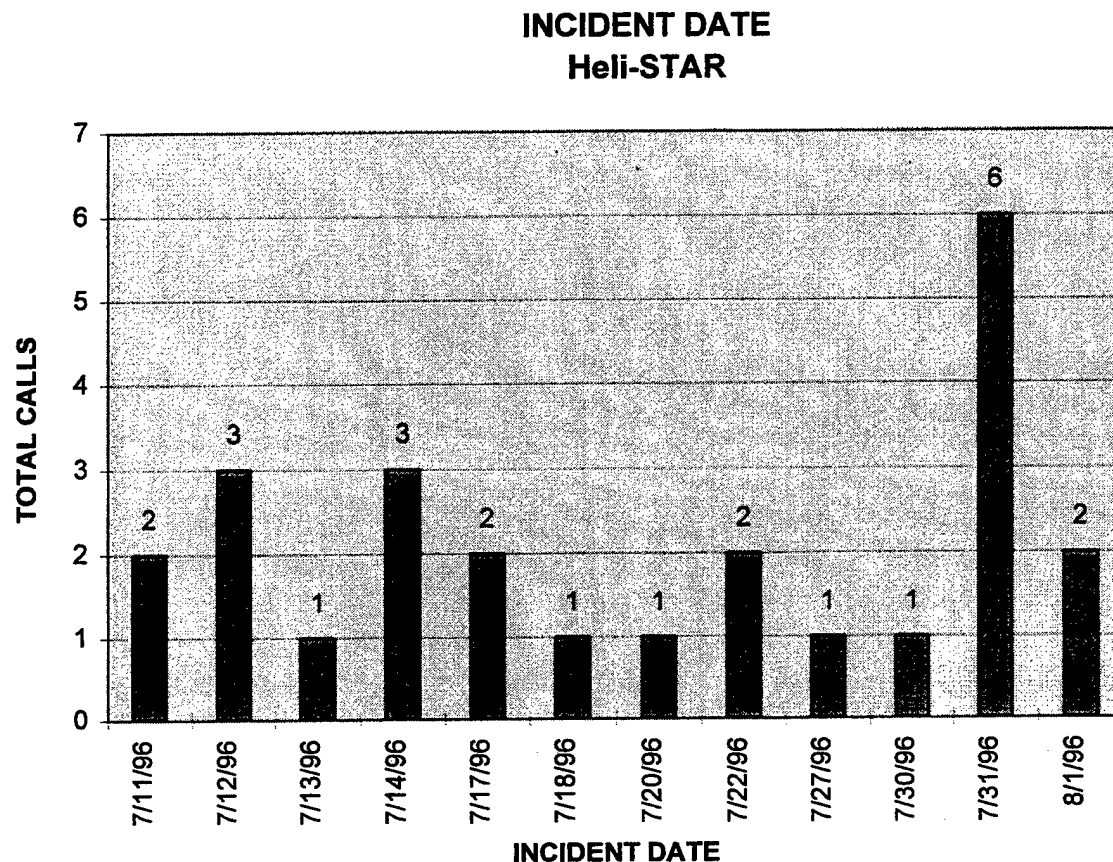
<b>INCIDENT DATE</b>	<b>INCIDENT TIME</b>
7/11/96	CONTINUOUS
7/12/96	CONTINUOUS
7/12/96	ALL DAY
7/13/96	ALL SAT. AND SUN.
7/14/96	ALL SAT. AND SUN.
7/30/96	NO RESPONSE
7/31/96	6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
7/31/96	6:00 p.m. - 6:00 a.m.

**CALLS WITHOUT SPECIFIC TIME OF INCIDENT**

Approximately one third of the callers could not pinpoint an exact time for the incident. Instead, these people described the time of the incident with words such as "continuous," "all day," etc., as shown above. Many people did not call the phone line immediately, but waited for several occasions to pass when increased helicopter activity was recognized. Also, residents stated that they finally called because they realized that they weren't the only people in their neighborhood bothered by the activity. When they found that no one else complained, many decided to take it upon themselves to call on behalf of their neighbors as well.

No pattern was formed for the first five calls on this list, but the last two received on July 31 were in regard to the noise produced by non Heli-STAR helicopters continuously orbiting south of PDK Airport as part of a police investigation. Many callers into the phone line appeared less upset once they were informed that a particular helicopter activity in their area was due to security or law enforcement.

I.



INCIDENT DATE

Callers into the community response phone line, identified incidents which occurred on the above 12 dates between July 11 and August 1, 1996. If the calls were separated into weekend and weekday incidents, a total of ten incidents occurred on weekdays and 15 on weekends. This suggests that people are more tolerant of aircraft noise, etc., during the week, but are less tolerant during the weekend. For the purpose of this report, a weekday is considered to be Monday through Thursday as well as Friday before 5:00 p.m. A weekend is considered anytime after 5:00 p.m. on Friday as well Saturday and Sunday in their entirety. Breaking this down further, a total of two incidents were recorded on Mondays, none on Tuesdays, two on Wednesdays, three on Thursdays, four on Fridays, nine on Saturdays and five on Sundays.

J.

**DATE/INCIDENT COMPARISON**  
**Heli-STAR**

<b>DATE OF CALL</b>	<b>INCIDENT DATE</b>
7/11/96	7/11/96
7/12/96	7/11/96
7/12/96	7/12/96
7/12/96	7/12/96
7/14/96	7/12/96
7/14/96	7/14/96
7/14/96	7/14/96
7/15/96	7/13/96
7/15/96	7/14/96
7/17/96	7/17/96
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7/20/96	7/20/96
7/22/96	7/22/96
7/22/96	7/22/96
7/27/96	7/27/96
7/30/96	7/30/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
7/31/96	7/31/96
8/2/96	8/1/96
8/2/96	8/1/96

**DATE OF CALL**

Several calls received into the hotline were in regard to incidents that happened on an earlier date. The list above shows the dates of all 25 calls into the community response phone line as well as the dates of the actual incident. Five of the calls were made one day after the incident. Two calls into the phone line came in two days after the actual incident. Some of these delayed calls were due to the time of the incident being in the evening or late night, so the individual did not call until the next day.

One assumption for calls not received on the same day as the incident is that people had more important things to do at the time of the incident and waited to call the response phone line. Another assumption is that some people did not call the community response phone line until the situation worsened or until they spoke to other residents in the area and found that they shared similar frustrations about the aircraft activity.

## **VII. Evaluation of Outreach Efforts**

### **OVERVIEW**

Between July 11, and August 2, 1996 the Heli-STAR Community Response System received 48 calls. This represented 39 calls from 25 local residents. Twenty-four of the residents called regarding helicopter noise. One caller was concerned with heliport lights. None of the calls were regarding Heli-STAR aircraft, except one gentleman who called about the heliport lights at one of the Heli-STAR helipads. The lights from the helipad shown in his bedroom late at night.

Of the 48 calls, nine were generated by our Steering Committee coordinating information as well as inquiries regarding the project.

Although not tracked, it is estimated that approximately 175 outgoing calls were made during the project operation in conjunction with research and response to the inquiries. This represents four calls per inquiry to the Tactical Operation Center (TAC), to an FAA facility, to an airport or to the POC to investigate a concern or alert operators to a noise sensitive area.

Of the calls from residents, 72 percent of the inquiries were from residents in the vicinity of PDK airport. This was because most of the helicopters were based at this airport and therefore most of the Olympic activity was in and out of PDK. In addition, many citizens in the PDK area are sophisticated community activists and are used to calling the noise abatement office at the airport.

Several calls were referred from FAA facilities, particularly the FAA Southern Region. No calls were received regarding helicopters in the vicinity of Hartsfield Airport and only one from Fulton County Airport. The referral from Fulton County Airport was actually related to a public service helicopter out of Dobbins AFB and was observed in the vicinity of Dobbins. One unidentified caller requested Hartsfield's noise abatement number regarding other aircraft activity.

There was only one call regarding any of the heliports in the Heli-STAR network. It was from the gentleman near the heliport at Nations Bank South. The heliport lights disturbed him at night. Based on coordination through the Heli-STAR response system, project staff were able to shut off the lights each night after the final helicopter operation.

All the calls received were regarding media and public security aircraft. These aircraft were involved in covering the Olympics either for the media or for law enforcement and security.

## EVALUATION OF KEY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ELEMENTS

There were two primary elements of the Community Outreach for the Heli-STAR project. The first was the Steering Committee, comprised of Atlanta area airport managers, representatives from local cities, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Aviation Security Committee and local FAA facility representatives. The second element of the outreach was the Community Response System. These two aspects were dependent on each other, in that the Steering Committee provided the coordination and flow of information to their local communities regarding the Heli-STAR project. Also the response line phone number was made public through the Steering Committee. Throughout the three weeks the phone system was operating, the Heli-STAR outreach staff coordinated with the Steering Committee and every call from a member's local area was discussed with them.

## EVALUATION OF OVERALL METHODOLOGY

As noted in this report, extensive planning was involved in the community outreach effort. This planning resulted in an effective and successful operation within the community. One of the most important aspects of this success was the continuous involvement of the members of the outreach staff in the project development from the beginning. Too often, public relations and community outreach efforts are required to operate almost in a vacuum. Involving them in technical meetings is considered unproductive. To the contrary, the involvement of the community outreach team in technical planning is critical for at least two reasons. First, the technical team, in any public project today, needs the input of the community outreach team. The community outreach staff needs to provide a "reality check" to technical portions of a project, particularly related to environmental concerns. Second, to be effective in communicating with the public, the outreach team needs to have a complete understanding of a project and its technical aspects.

Based on the preliminary methodology developed during the initial planning, the two key outreach elements proved to be appropriate and effective for this project.

From the initial meetings with key individuals in the Atlanta area, to the Steering Committee meetings and development of demographic information, the research, planning and coordination was based on the methodology established early on in the Community Outreach planning process.

## EVALUATION OF STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was instrumental in coordinating the outreach as well as the inquiries. Working with airport staffs, the FAA Air Traffic Control facilities, the ASO and the TAC, as well as with the Olympic Aviation Security Committee, was an effective means to address issues and research concerns.

Five meetings were held during the year prior to the actual project implementation. In addition, Steering Committee members coordinated with the Community Response System staff during the three weeks of project implementation. When inquiries were made to any of the members' organizations regarding helicopters, they were referred to the Heli-STAR Community response phone line. There were 17 organizations that participated in this network. Seventy-two percent of the 25 calls came from Dekalb Peachtree Airport (PDK) since most of the helicopter activity came from this airport. The noise abatement staff member at PDK and the Heli-STAR Community Response staff person talked virtually everyday of the project.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the Steering Committee, the Heli-STAR project was fortunate to have the involvement of the Olympic Security Committee. For future projects, this coordination and involvement with public agency aircraft is essential. Because of the unique mission performed by public agencies, it was their helicopters that were responsible for most inquiries. Therefore, close coordination and communication is necessary. It is also important to have direct access to high-level staff who can investigate and correct any valid concerns.

#### EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSE SYSTEM

The phone line was particularly effective because of the real time problem-solving capability. This was made possible because the response system was collocated with the operations center. The community response staff was able to interface with the operations staff and observe the tracking system while the caller was on the phone. This provided the caller with an immediate response to helicopter activity as well as the sense that there was some control of the aircraft over their home. Each call was received at the Heli-STAR Community response phone line in the POC. The Community response phone line was accessible 24 hours every day. One staff person was the contact person and when that person was not in the office, they checked the answering machine every couple of hours, seven days a week. In addition, staff had pagers and the caller could page response line staff.

Each call received a response within a few hours. Specific information was then taken from each caller. Once the basic information was obtained, the concern was investigated. When the investigation was complete, the individual received a call back with information. Follow-up calls several days later were also made.

In addition, the watch commander advised the community response officer of any unusual helicopter or heliport activity. This provided advance notice of possible calls from local residents.

The community response phone line received calls regarding all helicopter activity in the Atlanta area, not just Heli-STAR. Callers obtained the number from area airports, the FAA or their local city hall.

Even though the number of telephone calls to the operations center was not significant, it was evident that overall aviation activity during the Olympics generated considerable concern within local communities. It is difficult to determine whether or not any of the people calling the response line would have elevated their concerns to a higher, more political level. However, several individuals did threaten to do so during their initial call. One individual, who called the Southern Region FAA Administrator's office indicated that if he did not get action, he was going to call the media. Another one, in his initial call, talked about 'shooting them out of the sky.' In both cases, the callers seemed satisfied after talking with the Heli-STAR Community response line.

A list of helicopters in the area was developed, to include paint schemes, and if possible, "N" numbers, to more readily identify an aircraft when someone called the response line. A map with the latest noise sensitive areas and noise inquiries was developed and updated daily, as shown in Exhibit 6. This noise sensitivity map proved to be an effective briefing chart.

The only calls not dealt with on the response line were from the media and public officials. Media inquiries were directed to ASO, and any calls from a public official would have been referred to FAA, AND-710.

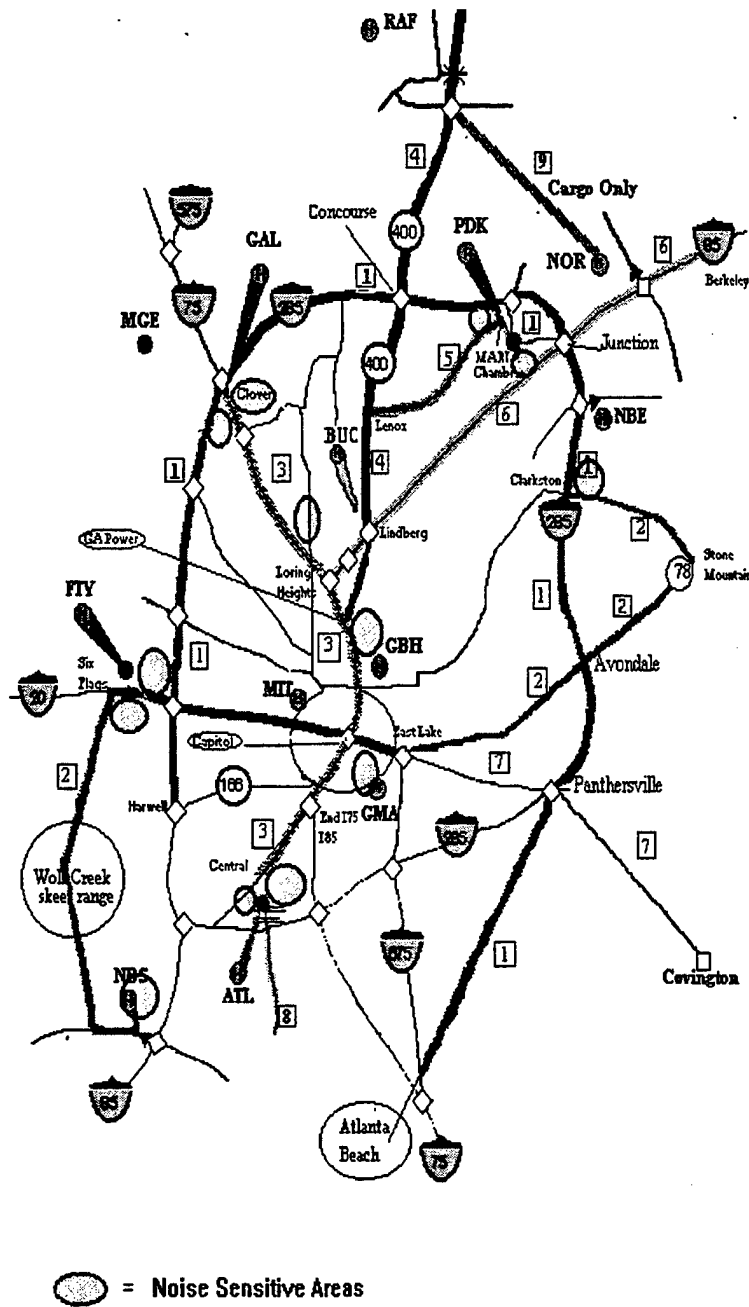
An important element in the success of Heli-STAR Community Outreach was the willingness on the part of project management to take all calls and investigate any inquiries, whether they were Heli-STAR or not (no calls were about Heli-STAR aircraft). This aspect of the project must be emphasized for future projects. The public, especially frustrated residents or public officials, do not differentiate between one type of operation and another. Therefore, it is critical to project success to be willing to take all calls and address the concerns to the greatest degree possible.

#### EVALUATION OF THE TRACKING SYSTEM AS PART OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A major success as a result of the Heli-STAR project in terms of the community outreach, was the positive benefits which were derived by having someone available to take calls, investigate incidents, and where feasible, or necessary, facilitate making operational changes. This required a team effort on the part of not only the Community Response team and the staff in the POC, but also airport staffs, FAA Air Traffic Control personnel, and the pilots and operators.

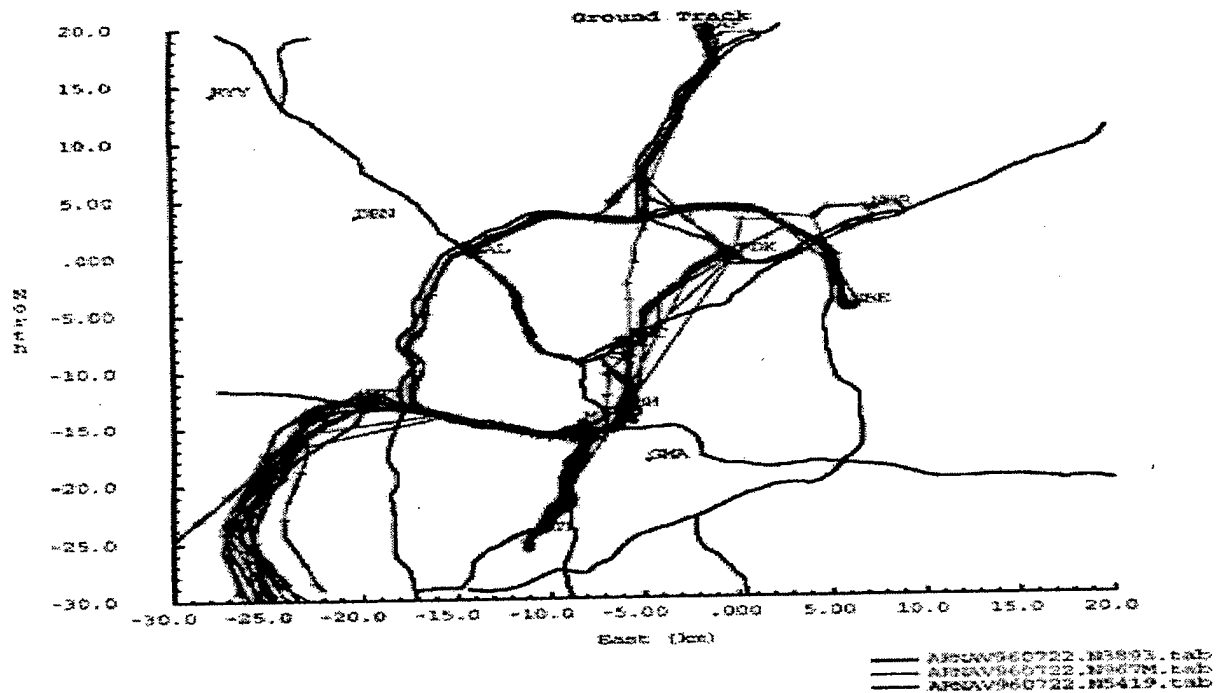
In addition, the most successful aspect of the community outreach was the ability to provide tracking information as part of the investigation. Computer printouts of the Heli-STAR aircraft strongly demonstrated the ability of commercial helicopters to remain on established routes. Similar computer printouts of law enforcement and security aircraft readily show the unique missions they undertake which means they are not abiding by established routes or fly neighborly techniques shown in Exhibit 7.

# **Exhibit 6** **Known Noise Sensitive Areas Atlanta Region**

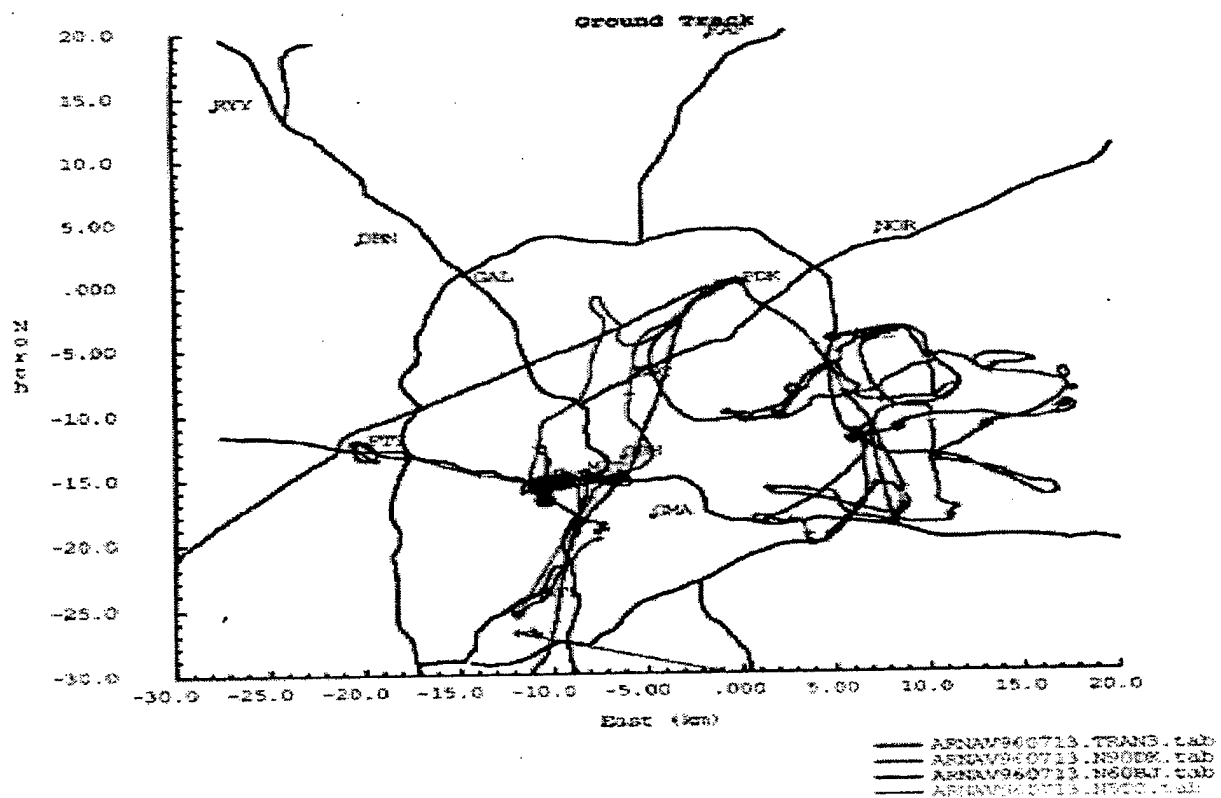




## Exhibit 7 Helicopter Tracking Devices



## Heli-Star Helicopter Overflights with Tracking Devices



**All Other Helicopter Overflights with Tracking Devices to Include:  
Media, Security and Law Enforcement**

## EVALUATION OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collection effort was an essential element of the project, not only to validate the work on the Community Response System, but to quantify callers concerns. Too often in past community outreach efforts, measurement techniques are not included. This makes it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the program or project. Meetings are held, calls are taken, but there is little or no paper trail to validate the concerns or quantify these efforts.

Therefore, a great deal of effort went into developing not only the comment form, but also the follow-up form (Exhibits 3 and 4) which document the inquiry as well as feedback to the caller. This documentation also provided opportunities to quantify responses.

The comment form and follow-up forms worked very well. Minor changes were made to the comment form as the first few calls came into the Community Response System. Several difficulties that could be better addressed in the future include, trying to more closely pinpoint the time calls came into the response system. A number of people indicated that the noise was "all day" or "most of the day." Definitions like this made it difficult to include in the "time of day" results. In addition, when a caller was reluctant to give a specific address or cross streets, it reduced the overall results in the geographic location responses.

Due to the low number of calls, it was possible for one person to man the Community Response System and be available 24 hours a day with a pager. At the same time that one person was taking calls in the Heli-STAR Operation Center, another staff member was entering the data from the comment forms at the home office. This allowed the staff to stay current on trends and additional requirements. In the event of a large number of calls, this aspect may also need to be changed. Alternative arrangements were developed as part of the project planning in the event that there was a large volume of calls. It would have required an additional person in the Community Response System office to research the inquiries while one or more people staffed the phones. In addition, a large volume of calls could have required additional staff for the data collection (comment and follow-up forms) portion of the project.

Based on the needs of the project, the data collection effort was very effective. Being able to monitor the results of the calls as the project progressed was beneficial. In addition, being able to track the follow-up proved an important element. In the event that a large volume of calls had been received, these documentation tools would have proved even more essential.

## FINDINGS

The system proved very effective in addressing inquiries. The Steering Committee was instrumental in coordinating the outreach as well as the inquiries. Working with airport

staffs, FAA Air Traffic Control facilities, the ASO and the TAC as well as the Olympic Aviation Security Committee was an effective means to address issues and research concerns.

The phone line was particularly effective because of the real time problem-solving capability. This was made possible because the response system was collocated with the operations center. The community response staff was able to interface with the operations staff and observe the tracking system while the caller was on the phone. This provided the caller with an immediate response as well as the sense that there was some control of the aircraft over their home.

Noise was the dominant reason people called the response line. Other concerns included safety, low-flying helicopters, orbiting helicopters and helicopters off the recommended flight tracks.

Sixty-eight percent of the calls were made by men, while 32 percent of the calls were made by women. This represented 17 men and 8 women.

More calls came in on Wednesday than any other day. Weekend helicopter activity did seem to disturb residents more weekday. Based on conversations with the callers, it appears that people were more tolerant of helicopters during the week, but became more easily frustrated on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays—especially Sunday mornings. One exception to this was on Wednesday, July 31, 1996. A number of calls were placed on that day from the area south of PDK Airport because of FBI activity as a result of the bombing in Centennial Park the previous Saturday morning.

One lesson learned is that the FAA and the industry need to get noise abatement information to pilots, especially law enforcement and security operations prior to, and during, any special event. Greater education efforts need to be made, particularly with public service agencies regarding flying neighborly. While most people understand that a public aircraft's mission is unique and often requires lower altitudes or flights over neighborhoods, this portion of the helicopter industry is causing significant negative attitudes and perceptions to the general public. These negative perceptions were extremely damaging in Los Angeles following the 1984 Olympic games. It is believed that similar negative attitudes and perceptions were made during the Atlanta games, even with the Heli-STAR Response System.

This possible negative perception was largely caused by the public service and security aircraft, mostly from out-of-town, who flew very low over many residential areas for the three weeks of the games. Even though very few people called the Heli-STAR response line (and none called regarding Heli-STAR aircraft), the calls that were received indicate that many residents were disturbed by the significant increase in helicopters and other aircraft.

A major success as a result of the Heli-STAR project in terms of community outreach, is the positive benefits which are derived by having someone available to take calls, investigate incidents, and where feasible or necessary, facilitate making operational changes. This required a team effort on the part of not only the Community Response team and staff in the POC, but also airport staffs, FAA Air Traffic Control personnel and the pilots and operators.

In addition, the most successful aspect of the community outreach was the ability to provide tracking information as part of the investigation. This is a critical component for future discussions with local communities. When residents become frustrated with helicopter activity, they talk about all the helicopters over their homes. In the past, it has been difficult to distinguish whose helicopters they are. This tracking system provides an important tool in demonstrating to local communities who is actually flying over them. In addition, all too often, residents seem to "forgive" a public service aircraft, yet oppose any commercial helicopter, even when they are being good neighbors.

In conversations with individuals who called the response line, this perception seemed to hold true. While they did not like the noise, once they found out it was a public service aircraft, they seemed less resentful of the activity. Unfortunately, the resentment seems to be transfer to commercial aircraft. One commercial portion of the helicopter industry for whom this is particularly evident is the media. Like public service aircraft, they have a unique mission, which requires departure from established routes. Unlike the public service aircraft, however, there is very little sympathy in local communities for their mission.

This has become a most difficult position for the helicopter industry to overcome. On the one hand, residents and their public officials appreciate and seem to understand the need for public service helicopters. But often they do not understand that it is these aircraft that are often causing the majority of noise concerns. They penalize the commercial operators for the noise, even when they are not the primary problem.

In the Atlanta experience, one glance at a computer printout of the Heli-STAR aircraft versus a public service printout tells the story (Exhibit 7). Commercial aircraft can maintain a route structure which is difficult for public service aircraft to abide by. The ultimate importance of this message is that heliports, helicopter routes, and commercial helicopter operations can be established, and to some degree controlled by local municipalities with these tracking systems.

## **VIII. Summary and Recommendations**

As a result of the one and a half year planning and implementation process for the community outreach portion of the project, a number of recommendations are offered for similar projects in the future.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

- The results of this project have proven the importance of community outreach in any project with possible community and environmental impacts.
- The involvement of local airport managers, FAA representatives and other community leaders was valuable as the project and process unfolded. Their input regarding technical aspects and local community impacts provided significant guidance throughout the project.
- The continuous coordination and communication between the various FAA staff and contractors involved in the project proved an essential element in the community outreach effort. Without team members and key local stakeholders having developed effective working relationships during the planning process, a number of key aspects would have been difficult to accomplish during the implementation phase of the project.
- Use of the community response system was an essential element of the project. Even though the number of telephone calls to the operations center was not significant, it was evident that overall aviation activity during the Olympics generated considerable concern within local communities. It was impossible to determine whether or not any of the people calling the response line would have elevated their concerns to a higher, more political level. However, several individuals did threaten to do so during their initial call. One individual, who called the Southern Region FAA Administrator's office indicated that if he did not get action, he was going to call the media. Another person, in his initial call, talked about 'shooting them out of the sky.' In both cases, the callers seemed satisfied after talking with the Heli-STAR Community Response staff.
- As a result of discussions with callers several days after their initial call, it was also evident that an important component of the response line was the timely call backs to inquiries. Most people were surprised that someone called them back. They seemed even more surprised, and pleased, when the initial call was followed up several days later to check on the situation. This personal and continuing attention is an important element in any community response system.
- It is important to have a staff who are experts in dealing with frustrated residents and familiar with aircraft operations. Communication and facilitation skills are important.

To be successful, it is not enough to have a phone line, or even to have it staffed. Callers are often very hostile and frustrated. It's important that the person taking the call is trained in how to deal with hostile calls and be able to have some local knowledge as well as operational expertise.

- It is important to include the community response team in technical aspects of the project and the planning effort. In the Heli-STAR project, the community response team was an integral part of the overall planning. This greatly assisted the response team to not only be more effective in responding to inquiries, but it provided improved coordination and communication with the various elements when researching an inquiry.
- One lesson learned is that the FAA and the industry need to do a better job of getting noise abatement information to pilots, especially law enforcement and security operations prior to and during any special event. Greater education efforts need to be made, particularly with public service agencies regarding flying neighborly. While most people understand that a public aircraft's mission is unique and often requires lower altitudes or flights over neighborhoods, this portion of the helicopter industry is causing significant negative attitudes and perceptions to the general public. These negative perceptions were extremely damaging in Los Angeles following the 1984 Olympic games. It is believed that similar negative attitudes and perceptions were made during the Atlanta games, even with the Heli-STAR Response System.
- This possible negative perception was caused by the public service and security aircraft, mostly from out of town, who flew low over many residential areas for the three weeks of the games. Even though few people called the Heli-STAR Response Line (none called regarding Heli-STAR aircraft), the calls that were received indicated that many residents were disturbed by the significant increase in helicopters and other aircraft.

#### ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

- None of the calls were made regarding Heli-STAR aircraft. Most of the calls concerned security and law enforcement aircraft and the rest were regarding media.
- It would have been a good idea to have had a law enforcement liaison to assist in coordinating with the numerous law enforcement and security agencies who often still have the perception of "we'll fly where we want, when we want and at the altitude we want."
- It appears that people seem to be more concerned about noise and helicopter activity on the weekends.
- As a result of the project, it also appears that people are less frustrated or angry if they know they have someone to talk to and that someone is investigating on their behalf.

It also appears to help if the person knows why the helicopter is flying. In most instances, the person seemed satisfied when they were told who was flying, and either what they were doing or an estimate of what the activity was.

- This does not mean that because the aircraft was identified that the noise did not bother them. If it continued, they would likely have become more vocal and eventually taken more aggressive (public and political) steps.
- Almost all the callers were pleased and voiced appreciation for the call back and conversation. As the helicopter activity and Olympics were discussed, each caller seemed to relax and calm down. When called back two or three days later, they seemed amazed and very appreciative. Each caller indicated that activity was greatly improved.
- For future projects that include aircraft activity similar to Heli-STAR, it would be helpful to increase the network series to ensure that most, if not all calls regarding aircraft activity, are referred to the community response phone line. Distributing handouts or business cards with community response phone line information to all possible networks would also be helpful in the future.
- Even though there were minimum phone calls to the response line, it would not be an accurate assessment to say that few people were disturbed by the Olympics. Individuals needed to know where to call. Also, many people tolerated the activity knowing it was probably due to the Olympics or thought it would do any good to call.
- People, for the most part were reasonable, but they did have frustrations. One threatened to call the media, one mentioned shooting them out of the sky. Many wondered what it would take to get the activity to stop. Letting them talk, and vent, prior to trying to discuss what was going on, was an important element in working with the callers. Another important aspect was the fact that each call was taken seriously, investigated and feedback was provided.
- The system proved very effective in addressing inquiries. A key element included coordination with airports and towers and TAC to identify and resolve inquiries. Because of the ready response and follow-up, callers seemed satisfied and in fact, complimentary.
- The interface and coordination between the Community Involvement Team and the GTRI acoustics team enhanced both aspects of the project. Noise data without action to respond or resolve potential impacts through a community outreach effort. At the same time, noise measurements and data analysis can greatly assist the community effort if used effectively.

- It is interesting that more calls came in during the last week of the Olympics. It may have been that people were just fed up and were not thinking about the fact that it would all be over soon. It was anticipated that people would either be used to it by then and/or recognize that it was activity regarding the Olympics and that it will be over soon. Therefore, these calls may signify that for many people, noise has a cumulative effect and they just got too frustrated and were not able to tolerate it.
- Factors for success? Calling people back, letting them vent without becoming defensive. Talking with them, being friendly. Empathizing. Researching answers. Staying in touch with them. Making the network work—getting everyone involved, educated and willing to make operational changes.
- It was important to know what to say, what not to say and when to say it. For example, one caller talked with the FAA's hotline in Washington, D.C. The answer that was provided to the caller was that, "helicopters can fly where they want to fly, and that helicopters abide by different rules." As a result, when Heli-STAR got the call, the woman kept referring to that and was very frustrated. The answer received during the first call was not appropriate information to give a resident, at least not in the way it was given, particularly early in the conversation. She was also told that nothing could be done. Not true. This demonstrates why it is critical to have a trained person on the response line, who is also familiar with helicopter operations and air traffic control, as well as someone who knows how to work with noise concerns.

### FUTURE USES/APPLICATIONS

Based on the effectiveness of the Community Outreach Program for Heli-STAR, there are many future applications as part of multi-modal transportation systems, as well as for existing airports, heliports or special events involving helicopters which could potentially impact local communities.

The Heli-STAR datalink provided the tracking system which demonstrated how closely Heli-STAR helicopters adhered to the recommended helicopter routes. The computer printouts displayed the tracks of each aircraft. This ability to track aircraft will be an important tool for proponents of future helicopter operations, whether for a specific event such as the Olympic Games or the Superbowl, or for scheduled helicopter service, or a local heliport or airport manager who is experiencing local concerns regarding helicopter activity.

In the past, many local communities faced with potential helicopter operations, especially a new heliport, were often reluctant to approve the project, believing they would have little control over the operations once it was implemented. With a tracking system like that used in Heli-STAR, helicopter proponents will be able to demonstrate to local officials their ability to adhere to the recommended routes. In addition, proponents can



show officials the accountability that they can have over operations with the tracking system. The use of this tracking system also differentiates commercial operations from public services.

In the past, neighbors often identified helicopter concerns, yet when they found out the operation was law enforcement or the fire department, they "forgave" the operation, but maintained a negative perception of helicopters, taking their frustration out on the commercial helicopters. This has resulted in denial of heliports and commercial helicopter operations. With the advent of this new tracking technology, helicopter operators are able to differentiate between the two types of operations. The commercial operators can abide by recommended routes and operating parameters to meet noise abatement requirements, while public operators have a unique mission which often requires them to be over local neighborhoods. Now this differentiation can be presented to public officials and discussed with local communities.

Local officials could require regular computer printouts of the helicopter operations to ensure that the helicopters are operating according to agreed upon criteria and in a fly neighborly manner. If and when local citizens have inquiries regarding specific operations, the tracking system will be able to validate a concern, or as with the Olympics, provide feedback regarding who and what is happening in their local vicinity.

This ability to track aircraft, while often intimidating to pilots, can actually provide the control and accountability for local officials and neighbors that has been lacking in past project proposals. It is this tracking tool which should be able to give officials and their constituents a level of comfort that will enable them to manage operations over their communities.

It is hoped that helicopter and heliport operators see the benefit that this tracking system brings to commercial operations. Rather than perceiving tracking as an enemy or "big brother," the helicopter industry needs to embrace this technology, recognizing that as professional pilots who want to be good neighbors, the tracking system validates their professionalism and in many ways protects them from complaints that are not valid. The printouts tell the story.

This tracking system, combined with a community response system and steering committee provides the basis for a revolutionary approach for the helicopter industry to address community concerns. It provides new opportunities to establish and maintain a dialogue with neighbors. It provides greater opportunities to develop trust and credibility with public officials and concerned residents.

The community response system provides the immediate feedback that is essential when the public has questions or frustrations. Maintaining communications is critical. Combining that dialogue with an accountability in the tracking system, provides the groundwork for implementing a systems approach for mitigating impacts due to helicopter operations. These two elements work in conjunction with a steering committee

who can guide and facilitate the helicopter operator(s) as they develop plans, implement programs and conduct operations. The steering committee can also be an oversight committee who periodically reviews inquiries and computer printouts.

In order for future projects proposing the use of helicopters to be successful, proponents need to incorporate a strong commitment to community outreach. This commitment must be based on more than rhetoric that historically has been common in outreach efforts. With the availability of these coordination and feedback tools and this new tracking technology, the helicopter industry will be able to demonstrate a commitment to the community. For the first time, helicopter operators will be able to substantiate this commitment in quantifiable ways at public hearings and to public officials. This can be the dawning of a new era for public-use heliport systems, scheduled helicopter airlines and other commercial helicopter operators.